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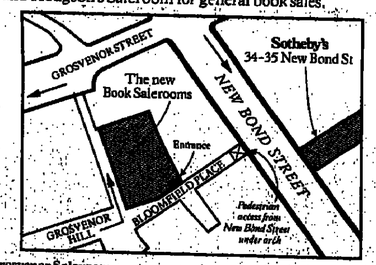
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The drama of disorientation

By Harold Beaver

T. WALTER HERBERT, JR:
Marquesan Encounters
Melville and the Meaning of Civilization
237pp. Harvard University Press. £9.
0 674 55066 8

Two missionaries arrived at the Marquesas Islands in 1791. They were brought by the same ship, the Duff, that had established the highly successful mission on Tahiti. But while one missionary stayed on to face a long and ultimately frustrating task, the other made off again. Why did Mr Crook stay on? Why did Mr Harris sail? The ship's captain, in *A Missionary Voyage to the Southern Pacific Ocean* (1799), tried to explain.

Crook felt encouraged from the start; he enjoyed the ceremonial greeting. But Harris was clearly shaken. He at first declined to go ashore, under the pretext that he needed more time for packing; and even after six days on land returned aboard full of misgivings. Still, he agreed to have another go and again went ashore. Four days later they found him hiding in the hills, having been robbed of his belongings, "in a most pitiable plight, and like one out of his senses". As far as the captain could make out, both men had been invited by the coastal chief to make a journey inland. But Harris had refused. So Crook had gone alone with the chief, who left his wife with Harris "to be treated as if she were his own". That was meant, the captain realized, as an unmistakable gesture of hospitality. But when Harris again refused, the chief's wife "became doubtful of his sex" and in the company of some other women entered his hut at night where they "satisfied themselves concerning that point; but not in such a peaceable way but that they awoke him". Harris thereupon dashed out of the hut with his trunk and went down to the beach, where he was further scared by a band of males; so he rushed off into the hills, leaving them to plunder his goods.

The captain's judgment was stern: "Discovering so many strangers, he was greatly terrified; and, perceiving what they had been doing, was determined to leave a place where the people were so abandoned and given up to wickedness: a cause which should have excited a contrary resolution." But from the start, Harris had felt inadequate, disorientated, undermined. When he awoke to find the women examining his penis, T. Walter Herbert, Jr argues, all this repressive psycho-sexual mechanism collapsed. He was flooded with impulses and emotions that he could not control. The event was literally unspeakable. It lay on the very edge of insanity. It could only be expressed in the vehement condemnation of the Marquesans as "savage".

In fact, it seems most unlikely that the women were "doubtful" of Harris's sex. Marquesans were simply more fascinated than we are with male genital characteristics. Melville, in *Typee*, suggests that he and his companion were subjected to a similar investigation. But for the missionary Harris, it was a confrontation with horror, the ultimate dread, the annihilating Boojum. The language of faith alone could not sustain him; nor could that of "civility". The concept of "civilization" as corroborating power did not yet exist: Dr Johnson had refused to admit the word to his dictionary.

Such is the theme of *Marquesan Encounters*. It is a peculiarly American theme, since to play the loner on a racial boundary was to adopt a peculiarly American stance. The original role of the frontier—whether in New England, or Jefferson's Virginia, or Cooper's New York—was to sustain a Janus face. For if from one point of view Indian savagery seemed degrading, by reversing the perspective the frontiersman could catch a view of civilization which was just as demeaning. Racial boundaries were defined by an ideology of exclusion: "Whether the savage domain is seen as a mess to be straightened out, or as a fructifying mystery to plunge into, it remains a place of the mind". It was a place for testing communal values and confirming or repudiating such values. Far more than a geographical zone, it structured American identity.

The Marquesas Islands, in this sense, typify the American frontier. Though claimed for the United States, the annexation was never ratified. They remained an ideal frontier; and Professor Herbert organizes his study around three major encounters separated by some fifteen years. First a naval commander: Commodore David Porter sailed into the Pacific during the war of 1812 to destroy the British whaling fleet in Polynesia, taking possession of the Marquesas in 1813. Next the missionaries: the Rev Charles Stewart arrived in 1829 as chaplain aboard the USS Vincennes and his enthusiastic account prompted a mission, led by William Alexander, to land in 1833. Last a romantic refugee: in 1842 Herman Melville deserted the whaler Acushnet, taking refuge in the interior. Each brought to this insular outpost his own model, or paradigm, or interpretative scheme, however inarticulate, of civilization. These systems might (in shorthand) be classed as the Enlightenment, Calvinism and Romanticism. But it is precisely Professor Herbert's argument that neither Porter's *Journal of a Cruise Made to the Pacific Ocean* (1815), nor Stewart's *A Visit to the South Seas* (1831), nor Melville's *Typee* (1846) exemplifies any such system. Rather, each records a moment of intense disorientation, and the peculiar rhetoric and dramatic structure, the adaptations and evasions and selective suppressions of each account reveal the writer's instinctive sense of identity. At the moment of crisis it is not social forms merely but identity itself that seems both threatened and confirmed, far beyond habit or prejudice. For if identity founders, reality itself gives way, as it did for poor Harris on Nukuheva. In this reading, then, it is the interstices that compel attention: not merely the said, but the unsaid; not the message only, but its code of metaphors.

Herbert imposes a steady structural pressure on his chosen pioneers, while his own book accumulates a kind of comparative grammar around that single Marquesan context. All this is admirable. Nor does it matter that we know next to nothing of that context from outside those sources: these texts are read by him for what they have to tell us not about the Marquesans, but about themselves. They are explored for their own hidden premises and devious articulacy. They are interpreted not so much as messages about others (savages) as for their own persuasive and civilizing coherence. It is as if William Carlos Williams's famous dictum were reversed. Instead of "No ideas but in things", the modern structuralist, in the wake of Saussure, exclaims: "No things but in ideas". It is for the various and conflicting ideologies he exhumes from his early nineteenth-century texts that Herbert himself wishes to be read.

'Perhaps that is why he is so painstaking about the matter of his own tactics. He is too conscious of his indecent reversal of old-fashioned American pragmatism. His text becomes bloated with "surd" presences and "regnant" imagery as soon as he contemplates his own procedures. Metascience, as he calls it, rather goes to his head. But in the patient unriddling of his texts he excels; and that is the heart of his book.

But there is another kind of reversal that he imposes. Commodore Porter's account, which is chronologically prior to that of the missionaries, is postponed to second place. That is, Herbert switches his texts to maintain the orderly progress of school histories: after the religious ferment, the enlightenment; after a puritan seventeenth century, a rational eighteenth century and a romantic nineteenth century. But this disguises the very impetus of the colonial experience. The movement was not from helpless dependence on divine mystery to rational self-possession, but the exact reverse. After the Cooks and Bougainvilles and Porters came the missionaries. But this only serves to emphasize the artificial, structured nature of Herbert's enterprise. It is a juxtaposition of discourses on which he is engaged, not a colonial history.

The mission that landed in 1833 was an offshoot of the successful American mission to Hawaii. It consisted of three couples (the Alexanders, the Armstrongs and the Parkers) with their four children. They quickly built a compound on rectilinear lines, with internal partitions for individual privacy and separate areas for each family. Nothing could have been more calculated to shock Marquesan sensibilities, nor to blinker the missionaries' view of their new environment. For a start, they could not grasp a social structure without a visible hierarchy of rank or seniority. They profoundly disapproved of Marquesan sexual exposure and open licentiousness. They were contemptuous of the non-stop clan warfare and Mafia-like feuds. They were horrified by the ritual use of corpses, that ultimate humiliation of enemies by triumphant absorption.

To the Marquesans, however, such cannibalism was heroic, since it made the whole tribe a repository of its bested enemies. Much of their culture, even by Homeric standards, was heroic, with its suspension of fighting during festivals, its prolonged ritual exchanges of taunts but minimal infliction of injuries. An early eye-witness recounts a three-day battle in which a total of four men were killed, The last day of the battle, he reports,

> is more for mirth than war, every one making the best appearance he can. Their Allys meet them on the mountains, makeing a grand appearance of about 4000, evry party bringing their drums and conch shells. A very grand dance ensues: some is fighting, others danceing. At times those that was fighting would set down and talk with each other with as much composure as though they was friends and then rise again and renew the fight.

Between Americans and Marquesans, as the Taipis were to discover, there was a confusion of metaphors. To the Americans war meant power: politics, in the classic phrase, carried out by other means. To the Marquesans war was more like a dance in which "participants" (as Liam Hudson recently argued in the *TLS*) were seen as performers and "the goal is to perform in a balanced and aesthetically pleasing way". Their battles, in fact, enacted rather than settled differences. They were a form of communication, as were the heated exchanges between the missionaries and their prospective converts on the subject of food. The Americans claimed that their deified fowls were mere food; the cannibals replied that if the missionaries ate the fowls, which were their gods, they "also will eat Jehovah". From which Alexander warily foresaw the possibility of martyrdom.

But it was not their hosts, the Teïs, who were really threatening; it was the Taipis (or Typees) who saw the missionaries as allies of their rivals. This was most disconcerting. It was one thing to be martyred; quite another to be killed as friends of the cannibalistic Teïs. The mission was thwarted. God, they knew, had a plan for the human race. It was a benevolent plan revealed, step by step, as the prophets of light came into conflict with the imps of darkness. They might be worsted in a skirmish, but the war had to be won. It was bound to be won, for it was a war of liberation whose ultimate victory was as predetermined as any Marxist revolution. A war of liberation not from the chains of economic slavery, but from the bondage to sin, with plenty of Calvinist torment and inner wrestling along the way.

It slowly dawned on them that there would be no repeat performance of Hiram Bingham's miraculous conversion of the Hawaiians; that Stewart's vision of

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the Marquesans as *animae naturaliter Christianae*, instinctively drawn to civilizing picnics, was a fiction; that Dr Johnson's "happy valley" was not to be found in Nukuheva; that the Marquesans lacked even the rudimentary language to express concepts of "law" and "government". Yet their satanic idolatry remained an obstinate challenge to a crusade. Even as his mission crumbled around him, Alexander mused that abandoning the Marquesans would be to "give infidels occasion to say the Gospel is not equal to the work of taming the rude savage of Nukuheva & Satan will exult when he finds he is left unmolested in his old dominions".

But what did "taming" mean? It was a euphemism for revolutionary destruction: a total abolition of the old religion; a total reconstruction of character; a total renovation of the culture. The missionaries' vocabulary assigned all Marquesan practices to a code of filth and death and darkness. Their role, as they saw it, was to be "made the instrument of razing to the dust such altars of abomination and blood, and of erecting on the ruins humble chapels of adoration and prayer, where the only offering required is the sacrifice of 'a broken and a contrite heart' ". But this revolution, paradoxically, was to be achieved not by arms, but by force of words. The missionary was the instrument of God. So God's vernacular had to be translated into Marquesan; or rather, the missionary had first to learn the cannibals' tongue, "if long to have my tongue unloosed". Alexander wrote, "that I may tell them plainly the glad tidings which angels rejoiced to publish." For history, too, was ultimately on the mission's side. Only it was not called history in those pre-Marxist days so much as "providence": and providence needs a longer run—plus a warship or two. In the short run the Marquesans noticed that Jehovah's so-called power was a fraud, that "the missionaries did not kill thieves, that they did not use physical force and were also unable to lay hold of the spiritual weapons that were available to the Marquesan holy man. A Marquesan *taua* was competent to lay on curses that would soon have destroyed a thief who made off with his belongings; but the white *toua* (as the Marquesans termed the missionaries) were altogether defenseless".

Commodore David Porter, on the other hand, relied not on spiritual reconstruction, but on education. He wanted to *elevate* the Marquesans, or *advance* them, by technical and commercial processes based on a common understanding and cooperation. This was not a matter of grace so much as knowledge; not of spiritual revolution so much as practical evolution or development. Unlike the missionaries, he was impressed by the Marquesans. He was impressed by their many achievements: their architecture, for instance; their astonishing neolithic techniques, hewing and fitting together stones "with as much skill and exactness as could be done by our most expert masons"; their skill in navigation; their spontaneous cooperation without legal or political restraints. Like Jefferson lauding the Indian, he concludes:

> They have been stigmatized by the name of savages; it is a term wrongly applied; they rank high in the scale of human beings, whether we consider them morally or physically. We find them brave, generous, chaste, and benevolent, acute, ingenious, intelligent, and their beauty and regular proportions of their bodies, correspond with the perfections of their minds.

High words which he soon had to circumscribe and redress. These nature's children also turned out to be lazy-minded, superstitious, gullible, muddled: "They are not fond of trouble, and least of all, the trouble of thinking. They are very credulous, and will as readily believe in one religion as another. I have sometimes said to them the nature of the Christian religion, in a manner to suit their ideas; they listened with much attention, appearing pleased with the novelty of it, and agreed that our God must be greater than theirs." Religion for them was merely a toy: their shrines were "baby-houses"; their gods, "their dolls". Their nakedness, though, he finds he can defend: it is not dress but manners that maketh woman. But cannibalism proved more intransigent: it was impossible to reconcile that with "generosity and benevolence". It seemed incompatible with their cleanliness and personal fastidiousness. "How then can it be possible," he asks, "that a people so delicate, living in a country abounding with hogs, fruit, and a considerable variety of vegetables, should prefer a loathsome putrid human carcass to the numerous delicacies that their valleys afford? It cannot be," he concludes, "there must have been some misconception." There could be no "fee fi fo fum" here: that would be altogether too irrational, too unnatural.

Culturally, then, the Marquesans were instinctive children, well endowed in body and mind, needing only "art" to perfect their crude democracy. But events were to put that premise to the test. Commodore Porter had originally landed to refit his ship. Trapped between rival raiding parties, he tried to make peace with both sides, only to be taunted by both sides. Having exchanged names, one Teti chief argued, Porter should share his hatred of the Happahs because they had cursed the bones of his mother who was now Porter's mother. The American knew he was entangled in "sophistry", but when a Happah attack was mounted, launched a counter-attack. Things immediately went wrong. By Marquesan standards he indulged in overkill; his muskets caused five fatalities. This was unprecedented. Suddenly he had been transformed, in Marquesan eyes, from a coward to a "demon of destruction".

The American presented himself as a super-tribal protector who could back his benevolence by an exemplary code of punishment. But to the Marquesans his guns simply exemplified transcendent *power*. Despite a prolonged drought, Porter was now showered with bananas, coconuts, breadfruit, sugar-cane, but above all, with hogs. In exchange he offered pieces of iron. But the Marquesans were trying to restore the ritual equilibrium by their gift of pigs (which, to this day, constitute the symbolic means of exchange on New Guinea). Furthermore they unilaterally declared him a *haka-iki*, or tribal chief, and built him a tribal village. All this is complacently reported: how on the fourth day after the battle, "upwards of four thousand natives, from the different tribes, assembled at the camp with materials for building, and before night they had completed a dwelling house for myself and another for the officers, a sail loft, a cooper's shop, and a place for our sick, a bake house, a guard house, and a shed for the centinel to walk under". Taking possession that same evening, Porter remarks that this village "had been built as if by enchantment". He named it "Madison Ville" and, after a salute of seventeen guns, took possession of the island. A fort was built at the entrance to the harbour.

What was viewed by the Americans as a rational balance of convenience was seen by the Marquesans as deference to savage and unpredictable force. When the Americans eventually abandoned Madison Ville, it was razed to the ground (except for a wall built by British prisoners-of-war). With power dispersed, the emblematic attributes of power too had to be eradicated. But first the power balance was to be yet further upset. The Taipis were deeply disturbed by the American-Teli alliance and suspected Porter's offer of peace. Porter reminded them of his victory over the Happahs, but the Taipis defiantly called them cowards and the Americans "white lizards, mere dirt". To the Taipis they had become "the posterions and the privates of the Telis", for the white man offered a wholly foreign paradox: an iron hand in a velvet glove. Instead of childlike reason, Porter was confronted by adolescent obscenity.

So he invaded the valley of the Taipis and, after an initial repulse, enacted his final paradox: a trail of terror. The bringer of peace, to his own amazement, destroyed a flourishing culture. The promise of civilization, as so often since, began with devastation: "Never in my life did I witness a more delightful scene, or experience more repugnancy than I now felt for the necessity which compelled me to punish a happy and heroic people."

Melville in *Typee* added an ironic postscript, observing that a "long line of smoking ruins defaced the once-smiling bosom of the valley, and proclaimed to its pagan inhabitants the spirit that reigned in the breasts of Christian soldiers".

With that accomplished, Porter set sail, leaving behind a holding party. Immediately the political alliance collapsed. The Marquesans started "stealing" back their pigs; worse still, several Americans deserted to settle among the Marquesans. "It could scarcely be credited at first," poor Porter recorded, "that men, even of the lowest order in society, surrounded by savages, and without the possibility of reaching a civilized part of the world, in an open boat, could seriously think of deserting." But on a nearer investigation of the matter, such was found to be actually the case." Yet the self-evidently superior fellowship of American culture had been undermined, from the start, for Porter, it turns out, had an antagonist called Wilson. Wilson was British; he had apparently settled in Nukuheva ten years earlier, was tattooed from top to toe, and spoke Marquesan fluently. It was Wilson who had been the constant intermediary between the Americans and the Marquesans. It was Wilson who acted as double agent, now abetting (it seems) the attack on the Taipis, now undermining the fort, coordinating the islanders and growing band of deserters in an attack, finally attempting to gun down the last of the absconding fleet.

Civilized conflict too, for Porter, was imbued with ritual that consolidated values and confirmed difference. It was a rite every bit as testing as a skirmish between Happahs and Taipis. However various their versions of protestant civilization, both Madison Ville and the mission were sustained by a superior power, a secret weapon of incalculable destructive force: the bullet and the Bible. Herbert never quite comes out to acknowledge the invincible self-confidence conferred by these B-bombs. With such an arsenal up one's sleeve, the game of "Who's Who" on the savage frontier was always worth playing. It contained all the fun of self-identification, with a minimum risk (pace Harris) of self-confusion and self-immolation.

So a challenge was posed by the deserter, the beachcomber, or *onoo* (Marquesan for "tramp" or "rover") afloat on the savage/civilized boundary: such as the renegade Wilson; such as Morrison who acted as interpreter for the Rev Charles Stewart and later advised the Telis to murder Alexander's missionaries for the sake of their belongings; such as Herman Melville who bolted into the hills of Nukuheva as deserter from the Acushnet. Rear-Admiral Dupetit-Thouars was anchored in Taiohae Bay at the time, annexing the Marquesas for France. The young American needed to escape this new-fangled French jurisdiction and so blundered into the valley of the Taipis. They soon found he was useless at mending muskets, but handy enough as an informer on the strength of the French squadron. The American, for his part, was humbly grateful for the chief's protection.

Young Herman must have long dreamed of such an adventure. He was a nephew of Captain John DeWolf II, the close friend of G.H. von Langsdorff, the Russian naturalist who had visited the Marquesas in 1804. He was a cousin of Thomas Melville who had served aboard the USS Vincennes in 1829, accompanying Stewart on his excursion into the Taipi Valley. This was no ordinary South Seas salt or layabout, but a learned and genteel cultivator of the picturesque. So he proved something of a conundrum, this gentlemanly deserter, this aloof and superior young fellow in flight from Christian civilization to benign savagery.

For the correlative of a gentlemanly tramp is the noble savage: both victims of a ruthless, materialist culture; both alienated, in a commercial age, from their past; both poignant survivors. As a beachcomber on this literary frontier, Melville was able to straddle both Taipis and missionaries, both native cannibals and French imperialists. He struck a Byronic pose, as if torn between horror and admiration (for the savages), hatred and nostalgia (for civilized life); preoccupied by his own instabilities, his own inner turmoil; fascinated by the clash of strange encounters; ready to borrow, refabricate, lie, for the ultimate truth of fiction.

That was the crux. It needed fiction to explore the ambiguous meaning of savagery and challenge of cannibalism. For Porter the Marquesans simply could not be cannibals. For the missionaries the savages inevitably were cannibals. For Melville they were mirrors in which we can study our own anxious selves (a paradox since Montaigne) in Swiftian guise:

> The fiend-like skill we display in the invention of all manner of death-dealing engines, the vindictiveness with which we carry on our wars, and the misery and desolation that follow in their train, are enough of themselves to distinguish the white civilized man as the most ferocious animal on the face of the earth.

For it was discontinuities that intrigued Melville, not cultural closure. His was to be a fiction of shifting perspectives and foiled responses: beginning in pain and depression (fleeced on a lame leg), succeeded by apathetic resignation (the limp deepens); crowned by delight at this "Happy Valley", secure from arbitrary codes and civilized cares. Taipi society, the narrator decides, is founded on the grand principles of virtue and honour. It is bowled over by the Cyclops-like [illegible] contends before the open eyes. But then he is stalled once more, perplexed. What were those taboos and tattoos but closed systems, after all? They both excluded him and, even more frighteningly, offered to enrol him. So he swung round on a cycle from uncertain misgivings to ambivalent horror, with occasional glimpses of a new radicalism. Might not "savagery" itself be a concept generated by Western ideology? Might not "civilization", as the means for transforming Polynesians, merely pave the way for their inevitable degradation? Was not "progress" perhaps a synonym for white imperialism? His was not a practical project (like Porter's), nor a spiritual project (like the missionaries'), but an aesthetic project. *Typee*, that is, does not impose a meaning; rather it generates a critical diversity of meanings.

Yet in this too Melville was a missionary, though his mission was not to the Marquesans but to his fellow Americans. "The term 'Savage' ", he had written,

> is, I conceive, often misapplied, and indeed when I consider the vices, cruelties, and enormities of every kind that spring up in the tainted atmosphere of a feverish civilization, I am inclined to think that so far as the relative wickedness of the parties is concerned, four or five Marquesan Islanders sent to the United States as Missionaries might be quite as useful as an equal number of Americans despatched to the Islands in a similar capacity.

It was in order to become such a missionary, as it were by proxy, that he had volunteered. Though, of course, he was misunderstood. When he caricatured a fat and priasy missionary's wife being drawn to church in a little go-cart by two Islanders, the *Christian Parlor Magazine* refused to see the point. "Better to earn a subsistance by industry as porters": it intoned, "than to slaughter and devour such cattle." Or perhaps it understood all too well, when it charged him with trying to convert Americans to "Typeeism".

As Malinowski recorded in *A Diary in the Strict Sense of the Term*: History is observation of facts in keeping with a certain design; an application of this theory to the facts as time gives birth to them." Herbert makes rather heavy going of such concepts, but his three inter-related narratives staged, within one generation, on a single island make a fascinating laboratory to test the two-hundred-year-old compact between Prospero and Caliban. For the anthropologist, his claims, had most to learn from Melville. That unstable, mobile, literary identity has become Prospero's professional identity.

But what of Caliban? Must he remain merely a subject for Western discourse? Must he remain for ever an enigma? May he never reverse Roman Jakobson's model of communication and send us a message back? We have no vernacular account of Porter's arrival, nor of the missionaries, of course. No comprehensive name for the islanders even, other than "the men" *(te tau 'enana)*. But there is evidence none the less. As Armstrong recorded:

> The behavior of the natives was a severe trial to my feelings, as it commonly is whenever we attempt to preach to them. Some lie & sleep; some laugh and talk: some quarrel with what is said: and others mock, and mimic the preacher & endeavor to excite laughter in others. Here one sits smoking a pipe, there one sits twisting a rope, and often there is such confusion that the speaker can scarcely hear himself speak. When we request them to be still and hearken to our words, they reply, "Yes, let us all sit still and listen". One says to another "sit you still there", and makes a motion as though he would strike him or throw a stone at him; the other must retaliate; and this excites laughter. Thus the whole congregation is a scene of noise & confusion. Not infrequently the half of all present will arise and go off, laughing and mocking. This behavior is no small trial to our patience & faith: I am sometimes tempted to give way in doubt, and ask: can such persons ever become civilized & christianized?

They were openly contemptuous of the Christian deity, calling Jehovah *tuae* (dung). They even seemed to have reached out for some form of cultural relativism. A chief's wife, according to Porter, rebuked a missionary for ridiculing their gods, when they did not ridicule his. If his God wished them to be convinced that they should worship only him, she argued, then he should also send his Son to instruct them. They would not kill him, as did the tribe of which the missionary had informed her. They would thank him for his good intentions and give him, as they had given the missionaries, shelter and food while he remained among them. Their gods supplied breadfruit and cocoanuts. If was the white men who had come to get the produce of their island. "Why would you visit us, if your own gods and your own island could supply all your wants?" she asked. "The gods of the white men are intended for them alone. The gods of Nukuheva were intended solely for us."

That missionary was none other than Mr Crook, who persisted alone in Nukuheva when his friends sailed on the Duff.



Twinning the two-faced. Jann Haworth's "Janus Mask", which can be seen in an exhibition of the work of "The Ruralists" at the Arnolfini Gallery, Bristol (until May 16), multiplies in a mirror the profiles of the Roman god of beginnings. Here Janus, who was also the guardian of gates and doors (the doors of his temple in the Forum Romanum were closed during peace and open during war), looks behind and in front but not at himself in the mirror; Jann Haworth's work is described as "neither painting nor sculpture" and stands, perhaps, on the frontier between the two, looking both ways.

The way to Missolonghi

By Doris Langley Moore

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It must be exhilarating for Leslie Marchand to have completed his long and intricate labour of editing, more accurately than has yet been done or attempted, all the known letters of Byron, 2900 of them, many now published for the first time. And it must be very satisfying to John Murray VI to have got them into print in eleven handsome volumes. His great-great-grandfather would have been amazed, not because they reveal hidden aspects of a character John Murray II stood up with remarkable acuteness, but because a day has dawned when there are no problems about indiscretions, no need to expurgate, no gloomy synod of advisers urging "Don't publish!" but only heartening invocations to publish and be blest.

I too can boast some little reason to congratulate myself, for I am the sole surviving member of the Committee which, in 1924, tried in vain to get a memorial to Byron into Westminster Abbey. I was twenty-one years old and my youthful enthusiasm had led Rowland Prothero to nominate me. (I am glad Dr Marchand has paid tribute to Prothero's pioneering work in editing the *Letters and Journals* brought out between 1898 and 1901 in spite of many difficulties made by the 2nd Earl of Lovelace, who would not let him use the very letters that he, (Lovelace) had received as a gift from the publisher's father. Ours was the third attempt to gain recognition for Byron in Poet's Corner, and it was implacably turned down; yet I have lived to see not only a memorial in the Abbey and this fine eleven-fold monument, but a complete change in the assessment both of the poet and the man.

Of course, there were many who appreciated him then, otherwise there would have been no such committee, no such widespread centenary celebrations, nor would it have been worthwhile to keep his works in print throughout all the previous hundred years, or for artists to contrive posthumous portraits and forgers to imitate his handwriting. Byron has never been neglected, merely seen as in a distorting mirror. Open any Victorian dictionary and we shall find "Byronic" defined by such adjectives as misanthropic, brooding, cynical, theatrical.

After more than ten years of application, Dr Marchand declares, "I can truthfully say that during that time my interest never lessened in the task or in the man. . . . The quality of Sincerity and Strength which Matthew Arnold found in Byron's poetry, shines through his letters in equal measure . . .". Sincerity and strength – these words are a reversal of the idea of a posturing and self-pitying egoist which made so many critics with less discernment than Arnold suggest that Byron's influence on earlier generations had been a vulgar error of taste. This latest and last volume exhibits the true Byronic features, of common sense, courage, pathos, humour, and sheer gusto. Besides revealing the sober, far-sighted and dedicated man who joined the Greeks and became the most practical of their supporters, it gives us a number of items that came to light too late for their proper chronological order—some of these go back to his undergraduate days —while, by the most extraordinary chance, a packet of his letters to one of his most intimate friends, Scrope Berdmore Davies, presented itself as bonus to editor, publisher, and readers.

The discovery of this packet, in a trunk deposited by Scrope with his banker before he left England in 1820 to escape imprisonment for debt, will doubtless be the subject of a detailed description in some future publication. Meanwhile, we have here fourteen various communications of Byron's to one who has hitherto been something of an off-stage figure. They illustrate what several biographers have observed – that in any substantial batch of letters written by Byron, we find not only vivid brush-strokes in a self-portrait but a clear glimpse of the person to whom they are addressed. He suited his style so adroitly to his audience that we can tell who are the strait-laced and formal (Byron can be extremely good at formality), which have a taste for ribaldry, which possess a humorous and responsive intelligence, who needs a high-handed approach and who relishes gossip.

In his letters to Scrope, the clever and facetious but rather shallow, hard-drinking, ruinously gambling Cambridge don, Byron is jocular in the flippant, seemingly heartless way he often affected with men of the world: "Hobhouse's brother's wife has brought forth a son—Hobhouse himself is several months gone with book but has probably felt fewer qualms than his future readers." This sort of sally was unkind to Hobhouse, but wit is seldom kind. The rumours always being circulated about himself by English travellers Byron denies whimsically: "I harm nobody—I make love but with one woman at a time and as quietly as possible . . .". Scrope inspired that special kind of drollery, but for all his place among the sharp-tongued wits, he must have been more sentimental than his friend guessed: in the collections are two short notes there could have been no conceivable reason for keeping except that they afford some testimony to his happy association with Byron.

Byron's last surviving letter to Scrope (January, 1819) takes him to task hotly June 21, 1851, affords a last sad glance at the group of advisers who gave in to "the atrocious cant of the day" by strongly opposing the publication of *Don Juan*. That he did publish his glittering masterpiece in the face of every friend except Shelley says more for his strength of mind than even his conduct in the Greek war. Whether his anger resulted in any estrangement from Scrope is doubtful. The latter was a homeless exile from 1820 onwards. The journal of Hobhouse – by then Lord Broughton – for June 21, 1851, affords a last sad glance at him:

> As I was going out of my house at half past eleven in the forenoon I was accosted by an old man, shrivelled and bent, who in a feeble voice asked me if I knew him. I told him I did not. He said "Scrope Davies". I was much shocked to see the robust active lively companion of my youth shrunk to such a remnant of himself, but I had not seen him since he parted from me at Newgate in 1819 . . . He is still obliged to live abroad, and continues to retain his King's Fellowship. He will not want it long.

Scrope died the following year in Paris.

The greater part of this eleventh volume consists of Byron's letters and journals from the date of his arrival at Cephalonia to his last written words, dated April 9, 1824. They are addressed to two bankers and are about money—the money he had been pouring out to keep the Greeks going until the arrival of the loan raised on the strength of his name in England, and which was subjected, though he did not live to know it, to the most disgraceful rake-offs and peculations; and the money, long overdue, from Lord Blessington, who had purchased his scarcely used schooner, the Dolivar, at a bargain price and paid for it with a draft that was dishonoured. Byron was obliged to give much thought to money because the demands made on him every day were a pressing anxiety.

He was ill and irritable, having had a seizure little more than three weeks after his thirty-sixth birthday—a mysterious attack which, he wrote, "was very painful and had it lasted a moment longer must have extinguished my mortality". The two young doctors in attendance bled him profusely, which may have considerably undermined him, for he had become a thin, debilitated man. To fit himself for a campaign, he had altered his whole manner of life, being available, though reluctantly, from early morning till night for visiting petitioners. He occupied cramped quarters with no privacy, and was unable, because of the cold rain which had turned Missolonghi almost into a swamp, to take the exercise on horseback that he believed was necessary for his health. Moreover, as he noted, trying to account for the sudden fit or stroke, he had been "perhaps not so uniformly temperate as I may generally affirm that I was wont to be."

He had gone to Greece without any of the romantic notions which caused other enthusiasts to retire, disillusioned, when they found that modern Greeks bore no resemblance to the classical heroes of their schoolbooks. He recognized that, after long oppression by the Turks, the Greeks had grown contentious, divided and devious. Their factions had been made known to him at Cephalonia but he had not expected to be immured, inactive as far as any contact with the enemy was concerned, in so benighted a spot as this

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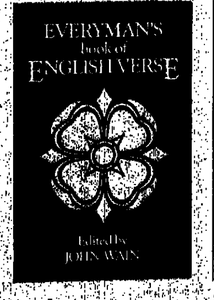
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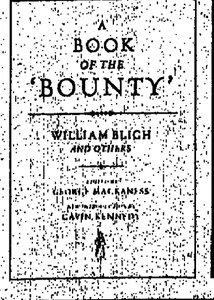
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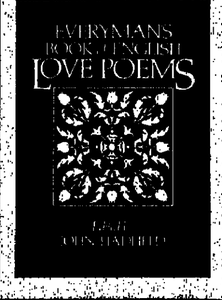
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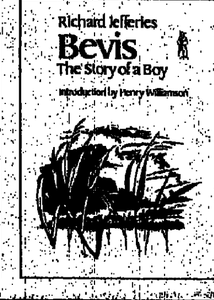
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rain-soaked little fishing town. To keep up morale, which was low among Greeks and foreigners alike, he rode out as often as the weather would permit with his brigade of running Suliots, picturesque in their white fustanellas. The scene is depicted on the jacket of this volume, sketched after William Parry's eye-witness description.

On the day of those last two letters, the weather seemed to be fine and Byron set forth, although his saddle was still wet from a previous ride. Whether the fever that began that night was the result of his clothes becoming drenched, or whether it was his old enemy, the malaria, recurring as it had done before, the next few days brought increasing malaise. The treatment of bleeding, cupping, blistering, and purging, and the use of medicines such as antimony (administered by doctors who were both inexperienced and panic-stricken), ensured that he would have a slow and harrowing death.

The editing of Byron's letters has been admirable throughout. In each volume, besides a list of sources, there is a record of forgeries, a bibliography and a biographical vignette of each of the relevant *dramatis personae*, not to speak of a helpful chronology of the events recorded. The footnotes indicate the thoroughness of Dr Marchand's research.

But—a footnote to a footnote—Prothero was wrong when he supposed, as did Harold Nicolson, that Byron had landed at Missolonghi in the dark pelisse given him by Colonel Duffie. He was wearing, on the evidence of Gamba, his aide, and Zambelli, his Italian secretary, the scarlet uniform for which he had bought numerous fine accoutrements at Genoa; and according to Mavrocordatos, his appearance in this dress "relieved and encouraged the Greeks who thought him as beautiful and impressive as Ares". The existence of a splendid hoard of the papers and household accounts of Lega Zambelli in the possession of his great-granddaughter living in Exeter (great-granddaughter on the English side of the famous valet Fletcher) was unknown until she died, aged eighty-eight, in 1949. Thus many details inaccessible to earlier editors were for more than a century unexamined. What will be the next find? Byron's letters to Thomas Moore in manuscript—where are they?

In Byron's Political and Cultural Influence in Nineteenth Century Europe: A Symposium, Paul Graham Trueblood has brought together twelve academics representing eleven different nations, each contributing a paper on Byron's effect upon the literature and politics of their respective countries. That Byron was an influential figure throughout Europe we have heard and read so often that we take it as an axiom; and yet how and why he attained this eminence not many of us could explain; except, perhaps, in respect of Italy and Greece, where he participated in attempts to overthrow foreign domination.

What, precisely, was his effect in Russia, for example? We learn from an excellent essay by Nina Diakonova and Vadim Vacuro that he had Russian readers as early as 1814, the year of "The Corsair", and was translated frequently while he still lived and before his private life had become a topic of discussion. Pushkin was one of his many translators, and contemporary poets adopted his themes and the defiant attitude characteristic of his Eastern narrative poems. *Don Juan* remained a closed book to Russian readers, who saw Byron as the genius of "stormy passions, and tragic fate". In the 1820s he was devoutly admired by the Decembrists. For these, after their revolt was crushed, his *Hebrew Melodies* became symbolic.

The Germans, ardent romantics, preferred *Manfred*, *Cain*, and *Sardanapalus* and hardly seemed aware of Byron's humorous and satirical aspects. "No other British writer except Shakespeare has seized so tenacious a hold on the German imagination", says Cedric Hentschel in a perceptive analysis which explains how much Goethe's reincarnation of Byron as Euphorion, divine but doomed son of Helen and Faust, must have impressed the older poet's following.

The symposium also contains a survey of the "Historical Backgound of Byronism" by Douglas Dakin. It is a work of great scholarship about the French Revolution, the aftermath of which Dakin maps out all over Europe; but like most densely packed resumés, it can only be easily understood by those who are already well-informed.

Valuable as all these assessments are, I find it strange that none of the dozen contributors has anything to say about Byron's Scottish heritage, which was surely a most important ingredient of his personality, and one which he never forgot, professing as he did to be born "half a Scot and bred a whole one". It might have been expected that Robert Escarpit, from no further than the other side of the Channel, would not be insensitive to the Scots and their traditional pride of pedigree, but he expresses the astonishing opinion that "Byron was a political figure even by his birth in the poor lower middle class, very near the workers . . .". It may be that in the world of Balzac, Mrs Byron's reduced circumstances after her husband had squandered her fortune would have relegated her to the lower middle class, but in Aberdeen the descendant of the Duffs, the Gordons, and of two Stuart kings was never deprived of a certain social standing, and when she came to England with her young son she was able to appeal to the Duke of Portland to grant her a pension, and to get Mr Pitt's order for a payment of £300 a year solely as "a tribute to the great houses" with which she was connected". Thus aided, she could bring Byron up with reasonable dignity.

"The penniless Lordy Byron of Newstead Abbey", as M. Escarpit calls him, had debts of thousands of pounds by the time he was twenty-one, but debt was the natural state of young noblemen. As for the workers, Byron heard of their desperate riots in Nottingham and delivered an eloquent speech defending them, but there is no sign from his correspondence that he ever set eyes on a stocking-frame, and when he went to inspect his property in Lancashire, he never in his own words "went within ken of a coalpit". Nevertheless, the French essay is a good one, and the whole book a valuable addition to Byronography, though it necessarily lacks the qualities of the subject's own account of himself in *Letters and Journals*.

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This caricature (1903) by Max Beerbohm of the first Baron Burnham, the newspaper proprietor, and this portrait by André Durand of Elizabeth Bowen are to be shown in the exhibition, "Portraits of Today: Recent Acquisitions" at the National Portrait Gallery (May 1 – August 23). Also included in the exhibition are a large number of works of Graham Sutherland, Gertler's 1932 portrait of Sir Arthur Bliss at the piano, works specially commissioned by the Gallery, among them Suzi Malin's portrait of Lord Home, photographs of Samuel Beckett by Paul Joyce, and of Anthony Powell, Eric Ambler and James Herriot by Fay Godwin.

The actor as character

By Patrick McCarthy

POL VANDROMME:
Robert Le Vigan
Compagnon et personnage de L-F. Céline
203pp. Editions de la Revue Célinienne, Trolieberg 20, 3200 Kessel-Lo, Belgium
350FB

The film actor Robert Le Vigan makes his debut as a Céline character in *Féerie pour une autre fois, II*. Montmartre is being destroyed by the Allied bombers, which are guided by a demonic artist who is turning Paris into one of his paintings. The narrator, Ferdinand, is in flight while the dancer, Lili, leaps pure-footedly from ruin to ruin. Suddenly the bombers vanish and Norbert-Le Vigan appears, wearing evening dress and surrounded by elegant furniture. Chaos gives way to an eerie calm as Le Vigan wrests control from the painter and transforms Montmartre into a silent film. Imagination, Céline feels, destroys and creates in a flux of being that is both evil and marvellous.

In *Robert Le Vigan, compagnon et personnage de L.-F. Céline* Pol Vandromme explains that Céline distorted the character of his friend. This is true but it does not seem very important. Moreover Vandromme repeats himself and relies heavily on long quotations from Céline. He might have done better to have collected information on Le Vigan's films and on his actions during the Occupation. The most interesting part of this book is a series of letters which Le Vigan wrote not long before his death and in which he talks freely about his life.

Céline could have found no better example of creative power than Le Vigan, who was born Robert Coquillard in 1900 and grew up in Barbès, a working-class area of northern Paris. He became an actor and was spotted by the film-director Julien Duvivier. In the 1930s he played bit parts in numerous films like Duvivier's *Pepé le Moko* and Jean Renoir's *Madame Bovary*. Duvivier also cast him as Christ in a dreadful film called *Golgotha* (1934), in which Jean Gabin gives one of his unhappiest performances as Pontius Pilate.

Le Vigan was never the hero who got the girl. He had "a thin, mobile face and small sharp eyes which disconcerted his audience". Sinister roles suited him and his speciality was mysterious, frenetic villains. His best-known performance was in Marcel Carné's *Quai des Brumes* where he plays a painter who is tormented because he can paint only the appearance and never the object itself; he commits suicide and leaves his papers for the hero, an army deserter played once more by Gabin.

Such roles spilled over into Le Vigan's life. He acted incessantly and wandered the Montmartre streets gesticulating to himself. He was pursued by imaginary enemies whom he escaped by diving suddenly into doorways. Yet the chameleon Le Vigan was also loyal, good-hearted and an enemy of all affectation. Around 1934 he met Céline: they were introduced by a mutual friend who specialized in faking old masters; Céline and Le Vigan watched with jealous admiration as his canvasses grew older before their eyes. At other times Le Vigan joined in Céline's harangues about the famines, floods and plagues that were about to ravage Paris.

When the Germans occupied northern France in 1940 Le Vigan collaborated and broadcast on Radio-Paris. Like many cinema people he was virulently anti-semitic and the emotional frenzy of fascism suited him. How much he believed in what he was saying is hard to decide. He used to march into cafés, yell a thunderous "Heil Hitler!" that brought all the people to their feet and then burst into laughter.

In 1943 he played the role of a colonial wracked by fever and madness in a forgettable film called *Goupi-Mains Rouges*. Then came his greatest opportunity: Marcel Carné offered him the part of Jericho, the old clothes-dealer and prophet of evil, in *Les Enfants du paradis*. The role suited him and the cast included his old friend Arletty. Shooting began in Nice and Le Vigan was superb. Then the Allies invaded Normandy and Le Vigan, certain that he would be hanged, shot and burned alive, fled. The role of Jericho went to Pierre Renoir, who was no more than adequate, and all that remains of Jericho-Le Vigan is one photograph in Carné's autobiography.

Le Vigan went to Germany and caught up with Céline. The two spent the winter of 1944-45 at Sigmaringen, where the French collaborators solemnly formed a government in exile and dreamed of the secret weapons that would rout the Allied army and send them back in triumph to Paris. Neither Céline nor Le Vigan nourished any such illusions and their dreams were of hangmen.

At the end of the war Céline escaped to Denmark but Le Vigan was captured and sent back to France. In 1946 he was tried and condemned to ten years in prison. He spent nearly four years behind bars, learned Greek and contracted emphysema before he was released early. He promptly fled to Spain, where he made a couple of forgettable films before fleeing again to Argentina. In Buenos Aires he found work driving a taxi during the night. He did not know the city streets and taxi-drivers were easy prey for hoodlums. When several of his friends were killed, Le Vigan gave up and began teaching Greek and French. After years of poverty he married a Frenchwoman and went to live at Tendril, deep in provincial Argentina.

Céline had not forgotten Le Vigan: he told his friends that Le Vigan had made a speciality of playing death-bed scenes in Argentinian films. In his novels he cast Le Vigan as the extreme example of the artist who must create in order to survive. The trilogy—*D'Un Château l'autre*, *Nord* and *Rigodon*—opens when the narrator, Ferdinand, has a hallucination and sees Le Vigan dressed as a gaucho. This inspires Ferdinand to pluck from the past the tale of Sigmaringen. At the trilogy moves on Germany is being destroyed and it becomes ever more difficult to create. Le Vigan is forced into two roles: Christ and "the man from nowhere". The trilogy is full of mad priests and Le Vigan's false Christ is both another image of Céline's absent God and a blasphemous tribute to the artist's redemptive power. But "the man from nowhere", a part which Le Vigan, significantly, never played, is scarcely a role at all; it merely gives some vague shape to Le Vigan's almost total nothingness. In *Rigodon* he tries for the last time to assert his creative power when he jumps in front of von Ribbentrop's car proclaiming "You will never again take France, von Runstedt." But after this tour de force of collaborator's patriotism Le Vigan fades away, leaving behind his cat, Bébert, which Ferdinand carries off to Denmark. The Allied bombing is reducing Europe to rubble, Ferdinand is finding it harder and harder to speak and creative imagination is failing silent.

Le Vigan hated what Céline had done to him. He especially disliked the way Céline had depicted him fading away in 1945. He had not just vanished, Le Vigan felt, he had lived on in prison and in exile. In the letters which Pol Vandromme reproduces Le Vigan was reaffirming his own identity. Yet one feels that he had indeed become a Céline character. His letters are full of gloomy rhetoric, outbursts of resentment and pleas to a dead God. "I have no friends and no-one to talk to", he writes, "I live in absolute silence, I am the man of destiny who was scattered throughout Balzac's work in dozens of novels to success". Writing in the mid-1920s Mandelstam argues that this individualistic confidence is anachronistic:

> It is clear that when we entered the age of powerful social movements and organized mass actions, both the psychology and the individual in history underwent changes and influence of the novel declined, for the generally accepted role of the individual in history serves as a kind of monometer indicating the pressure of the social atmosphere. The measure of the novel is human biography or a system of biographies. Very early on, the new novelist sensed that individual fate did not exist, and he attempted to uproot the social vegetation he needed, its entire root system, radicles and all. Thus the novel always suggests to us a system of phenomena controlled by a biographical connection and measured by a biographical measure.

Prophetically, Mandelstam announces that the future development of the novel will be "no less than the history of the atomization of biography as a form of personal existence" and he adds that we shall also witness "the catastrophic collapse of biography". He concludes:

> Today Europeans are plucked out of their own biographies, like balls out of the pockets of billiard tables . . . . A man devoid of biography cannot be the thematic pivot of the novel, while the novel is meaningless if it lacks interest in an individual, human fate, in a plot and all its auxiliary motifs. What is more, the interest in psychological motivation (by which the declining novel so skilfully sought to escape, already sensing its impending doom) is being radically undermined and discredited by the growing impotence of psychological motives in the confrontation with the forces of reality, forces whose reprisals against psychological motivation become more cruel by the hour.

Mandelstam's argument is that history has overwhelmed both the individual and the novel, and so we can no longer credit the novelist's assumption of a relation between the finely touched spirit and the growing good of the world. By implication, this is the case for documentary writing (*The Gulag Archipelago*, for example), for super-realist fiction and for the short story. It also comprehends the last great novel in English, *Ulysses*, because that epic work is formally very close to the temporal restrictions of the short story—everything is concentrated into a single day. And, significantly, *Ulysses* began life as an idea for a short story about a Dublin car called Hunter.

The short story writer severs the connections between individual biography and history, and he offers the fictional equivalent of those moments "in and out of time" which break over the "unmoving" lines of the *Four Quartets*. Thus the short story is a static form which slips out of the historical process and presents epiphanies, specks of time, or brief compacted actions. A disadvantage here is that a collection of short stories can offer a surfeit of chill privacies—rather like a gallery full of Hopper's paintings. Indeed, Bernard Bergonzi has argued in a discussion of the short story appended to *The Situation of the Novel* that the form tends to "filter down experience to the prime elements of defeat and alienation". This is an arresting generalization but it is based on that confusion of art and life which vitiates a great deal of literary criticism and which must bear some responsibility for the current twilight state of literary studies. Bergonzi writes as a critic of novels when he first praises the adroit style of a collection of stories by Sally Bingham and then expresses doubt about how far it is based on "direct observation" and how far it relies "perhaps unconsciously, on established literary models". "Direct observation" is like the term "accurate rendering": presupposes that *within* a fiction there is a distinction between reality and the writer's vision of reality which is his style. It's a vision of the individual in history that novels and influence of the

Specks of unhistorical time

By Tom Paulin

WALTER ALLEN:
The Short Story in English
413pp. Clarendon Press: Oxford University Press. £9.50.
0 19 812666 2

Although there are no great short stories which aspire to be novels, there are great novels which dream of becoming short stories. In the last paragraph of *Middlemarch*, for example, the epic narrative disappears into an invisible short story:

> her [Dorothea's] finely-touched spirit had still its fine issues, though they were not widely visible. Her full nature, like that river of which Cyrus broke the strength, spent itself in channels which had no great name on the earth. But the effect of her being on those around her was incalculably diffusive: for the growing good of the world is partly dependent on unhistoric acts; and that things are not so ill with you and me as they might have been, is half owing to the number who lived faithfully a hidden life, and rest in unvisited tombs.

Here, we have a fine and poignant definition of the different ambitions of the two forms. Where the short story, in Frank O'Connor's argument, deals with a "submerged population group", has never had a hero, and often has an atmosphere of "intense loneliness", the novel depends on figures like Dorothea Brooke who appear "widely visible" both to the reader and to society. The novelist believes that there is a shaping, mutually sustaining, relationship between the individual and history, while the short story writer is an unillusioned quietist who describes the hidden lives of powerless people. In his eyes, the novel is a trendy, optimistic, slapdash form held together by the affairs of history men and history women, while the short story, like the rest of us, is helpless before what happens to happen.

When Dorothea is presented as a failed public figure she quits the society of the novel and joins that submerged population from which the short story draws its characters. Yet George Eliot cannot quite let go of that Whig interpretation of history which sustains the nineteenth-century novel. Although Dorothea disappears into the private life she has still somehow the power to influence history—her actions may be "unhistoric" but they are nonetheless contributions to progress. In her ordinary social and domestic life she assists "the growing good of the world". It's as though we are asked to believe that the National Health Service was created not by political action but by small subscriptions of individual decency over a long period of time. In fact, on one level the tantalizing ghostly conclusion of *Middlemarch* advances a nineteenth-century liberal argument for private philanthropy, and a more contemporary version would stress the moderate case for the importance of the private sector. George Eliot clings to this argument because to relinquish it is to question the very existence of the novel form—a form which assumes that there is a last line which connects the individual to history. To doubt the novel is to doubt the optimistic assumptions of liberal humanism, which in George Eliot's intriguing formulation, traces historic influence back to certain overgrown and "unvisited" graves in Highgate cemetery.

In a fascinating essay, "The End of the Novel", Mandelstam sets the novel form against the Russian political experience of the first two decades of this century and argues that the novel is no longer viable. He suggests that the flourishing of the novel in the nineteenth century must be viewed as "directly dependent on the Napoleonic epos" which caused "the stock value of the individual in history to rise to an extraordinary manner". Thus the typical biography of Bonaparte, the expressive man of destiny was scattered throughout Balzac's work in dozens of novels of success". Writing in the mid-1920s Mandelstam argues that this individualistic confidence is anachronistic:

> It is clear that when we entered the age of powerful social movements and organized mass actions, both the psychology and the individual in history underwent changes and influence of the novel declined, for the generally accepted role of the individual in history serves as a kind of monometer indicating the pressure of the social atmosphere. The measure of the novel is human biography or a system of biographies. Very early on, the new novelist sensed that individual fate did not exist, and he attempted to uproot the social vegetation he needed, its entire root system, radicles and all. Thus the novel always suggests to us a system of phenomena controlled by a biographical connection and measured by a biographical measure.

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form which is full of "life", while the short story is a superficial form which is all mere "style" and is therefore very limited in its capacity to "deepen our understanding of the world, or of one another". Here the novel critic speaks as a vitalistic moralist who is hostile to pure art: the results of this attitude can be seen in the tedious moral pamphrase which constitutes much literary criticism.

Stylistic self-consciousness and a playful awareness of "established literary models" are essential to the short story, and many famous short stories declare or imply their relation to certain predecessors. Thus James's "The Beast in the Jungle" and Joyce's "A Painful Case" have a common root in Maupassant's "Regret", which is a story of an old bachelor who has "never been loved" and who at last sits down under some leafless trees and weeps. Both stories resemble reply-poems in that they alter Maupassant's terms (John Marcher and James Duffy reject the love they are offered). Similarly, Lawrence's "Samson and Delilah" is in part a tribute to Synge's *The Playboy of the Western World* and "Odour of Chrysanthemums" is a version of *Riders to the Sea*. Katherine Mansfield's "Marriage à la Mode" is a reworking of Chekhov's "The Grasshopper" and Frank O'Connor has a story called "A Story by Maupassant".

Maupassant's short stories have what Sean O'Faolain calls a "whip-crack ending"—they first mobilize and then satisfy an appetency and on re-reading give only a dead or feeble pleasure. Nevertheless Maupassant is one of the great masters of the form and in that ruthlessly brilliant story "A Painful Case" Joyce set himself the demanding task of bettering Maupassant. In his opening paragraph—crowded streets on a grey warm Sunday evening, lamps like "illumined pearls"—Joyce designs an impressionist image of Dublin as Paris and this prepares us for a quasi-Parisian story out of Maupassant which involves two seedy flâneurs and a "slavey". However, Joyce appears not to be concerned to tell a story—the two men, Lenehan and Corley, talk hollowly, and Lenehan appears anxious that his companion will help him in some unspecified manner. Corley boasts of his friendship with a girl who gives him cigarettes and cigars and pays their tram fares. Corley then meets the girl, Lenehan wanders about the streets and later meets up with his friend. So far the story exists simply as a sketch of fringe lives in Dublin and it's only at the very last moment that it springs a completed plot on the reader. Anxiously, Lenehan asks, "Can't you tell us?" . . . 'Did you try her?" And immediately we are reading the last paragraph:

> Corley halted at the first lamp and stared grimly before him. Then with a grave gesture he extended a hand towards the light and, smiling, opened it slowly to the gaze of his disciple. A small gold coin shone in the palm.

As in a story by Maupassant, there is that snap of recognition—Corley has carried out his unspecified promise to Lenehan by scrounging the coin from the girl, and we can understand this only when we have read the last sentence. However, this ending goes far beyond the cut-and-dried surprise at the end of a story by Maupassant. It is an imagistic, an epiphanic, conclusion which also glows with a suggestive symbolism—Corley as policeman, Lenehan as paid informer or Judas: the girl as a tawdry emblem of Ireland betrayed. That small gold coin is the vanishing point into which every element in the story rushes; for what at first appeared to be a drifting formless sketch is at the last moment given tense and perfect form. This is what Sean O'Faolain calls "the eloquence of form" and it is a recognition that is instinct with a sense of joy and aesthetic redemption. This formal pleasure has nothing to do with naive realism or with the "accurate rendering" of experience.

Poe describes this aesthetic experience best in his famous review of Hawthorne's *Twice-Told Tales* where he argues that in the "brief tale" an artist is able to carry out "the fulness of his intention". He aims at a "certain unique or *single* effect" and ensures that every word tends to "the one pre-established design":

> And by such means, with such care and skill, a picture is at length painted which leaves in the mind of him who contemplates it with a kindred art, a sense of the fullest satisfaction. The idea of the tale has been presented unblemished, because undisturbed; and this is an end unattainable by the novel.

Poe's aesthetic argument is close to our experience of "Two Gallants", and his analogy with painting is inspiring for it suggests that the literary critic must follow the art critic in discussing style, technique, form and tradition, rather than content, the achievement of "felt life" or imaginative sympathy. In a discussion of the origins of the modern short story with which he opens his study *The Short Story in English*, Walter Allen draws a helpful quotation from Poe's review of Hawthorne and he also remarks interestingly on Flaubert's influence. By his exemplary dedication to his art, Flaubert stressed that treatment is "almost everything" while subject is "relatively unimportant". For him, the "capital difficulty" was "style, form, the indefinable beauty, which is the result of the conception itself, and which is the splendour of truth, as Plato used to say".

Although the characters in many short stories lack the social status which characters in a novel almost invariably possess, those in Lawrence's stories are often redeemed from isolation by their commitment to a relationship. Instead of existing permanently on the fringes of society, they acquire through that commitment the confidence and pride of life we associate with characters in a novel. In such stories as "The Horse Dealer's Daughter", "Fanny and Annie" and "You Touched Me", the characters begin to emerge from that condition of fugitive downtrodden privacy which is the underground world of the short story. And like George Eliot in *Middlemarch*, Lawrence gives to his provincial characters a momentousness of treatment which never admits to any sense of inferiority about their relation to the capital.

Lawrence's stories have received scant critical attention. This is because critics ignore formal questions and fatuously concentrate on intensity and flux and on that doctrine of the dark mysteries of experience which the novels preach. For example, in his study of *The Prussian Officer*, Keith Cushman has shown that "Odour of Chrysanthemums" went through five major revisions—Lawrence brought it towards perfection with Flaubertian dedication—but Cushman is unable to comprehend such conscious artistry and insists that "nevertheless the main creative impulse came from Lawrence's own experience", in a manner characteristic of novel critics Cushman describes the story as "a moving statement about the human condition". Unfortunately, Walter Allen subscribes to this novelistic view when he states that most of the stories in *The Prussian Officer* are "products of Lawrence's day-to-day experience in the Nottinghamshire and Derbyshire coalfields". And Allen's mistaken belief that short stories are paraphrases of experience is responsible for a critical method which does little more than give moral comment to expansive summaries of numerous stories. However, he quotes aptly, communicates a ripe sense of enjoyment, and discusses a wide range of writers—he pays a deserved tribute to Henry Lawson, though his exclusion of John McGahern is mystifying. In first tracing the beginnings of the modern short story to Scott's "The Two Drovers" and then arguing for its influence on Mérimée's "Mateo Falcone" he valuably gives the form a solid historical foundation which future critics must attend to. For it is only by combining formalism with the historical sense that literary studies can survive the deep-seated crisis of confidence which in their different ways this critical work and the split in the Cambridge English Faculty reveals.

Gore Vidal
CREATION

Wilbur Smith
MEN OF MEN

Catherine Cookson
TILLY TROTTER WED

Nicolas Freeling
ONE DAMN THING AFTER ANOTHER

David Shobin
THE UNBORN

Christopher Dunn
DEADLINES

Constance Heaven
THE WILDCLIFFE BIRD

Arthur Herzog
ARIES RISING

Heinemann

The price of exile

By Mark Abley

JOHN COULTER:
In My Day: Memoirs
357pp. Toronto: Hounslow Press. $60.
0 88882 033 X

In his volume of poetry *The Blossoming Thorn*, John Coulter spoke of "the ambushed grief / In the heart/Of the immigrant-exile . . . /He is a man with himself at war". An Ulsterman by birth and upbringing, Coulter had moved to Dublin as a young man, to England as he approached middle age, and to Canada when he was forty-eight. There were good reasons for all his journeys, but the moves deprived him of a sense of community and made it difficult for his many plays to reach an audience. "I don't think anyone can emigrate successfully after their mid-twenties", he said in an interview two years ago. "I never did feel truly Canadian and I don't now. Yet I feel more alien in Dublin or London than I do here". Coulter died in Toronto in December 1980, at the age of ninety-two. He was still writing plays; he was still wounded by anonymity.

Coulter did have the satisfaction of seeing his memoirs, *In My Day*, published in a limited edition last autumn, but he never gained the recognition which he deserved and for which he longed. For his career was an important one, especially in the cultural history of his final homeland. The pattern of his work in the 1940s is, indeed, emblematic of the patterns adopted by many Canadian artists since. In a preface to the opera *Deirdre of the Sorrows*, the libretto of which he wrote in 1944 to music by Henley Willan, Coulter defended his choice of a Gaelic legend as the subject for a Canadian opera: "The art of a Canadian remains, with but little differentiation, the art of the country of his forebears, and the old world heritage of myth and legend remains his heritage, to be used by him for suitable ends." (For the libretto he adapted his earliest play, *Conochar's Queen*, which had been printed in 1917.) Such a faith did not endure, and as Ireland faded in his memory he could soon proclaim, "A hundred Canadian plays are waiting for Canadians who will write them". This conscious shift of subject-matter foreshadowed the nationalistic preoccupations and the new world myths that have become so important in Canadian literature since 1960. The play which seemed to have been waiting for *him* was a portrait of Louis Riel.

Riel, the Métis poet who inspired and led unsuccessful rebellions against the white settlement of western Canada in 1869 and 1885, has always been a controversial figure: a heroic martyr to many, a villain to many more. Coulter's *Riel*, first produced in 1950, was an early sign of his current rehabilitation. An epic drama in which Coulter drew on Brechtian techniques to tell a story of spiritual pride, personal heroism and political misjudgment, *Riel* was his masterwork. It remains the finest play yet written about Canadian history. Immersion in the language and culture of the past had freed Coulter's imagination, which tended to stay earthbound when, as in a dramatized biography of Winston Churchill, he wrote about the present. *Riel* also marked the first occasion on which anyone had used the vast artistic possibilities that underlie the memory of those small revolts since 1950. Louis Riel has become as familiar to residents of Canada as John Brown to Americans or Patrick Pearse to the Irish. For all Coulter's devotion in listening at street corners and bus-stops for the distinctive qualities of Canadian speech, his ear and voice were most at ease among the artifices of history. The best of his late plays, *François Bigot*, takes as its subject the decadence of New France and the glamorous vices of its final *intendant*.

Born in Belfast in 1888, Coulter had grown up in an unglamorous patch of city between the Falls Road Catholics and the Shankill Road Protestants, both of whom, he later claimed, would beat him up for failing to curse the other side. Though his parents were faithful Protestants, "I was an existentialist before I was out of my teens". His literary ambitions developed slowly; he initially hoped to be a painter, and moved into journalism and playwriting only by way of tinkering at it in schools. In 1918 he enlisted the help of Yeats in trying "to extend the work of the amateur Ulster Literary Theatre into that of a professional company with a building of its own": that is, to provide Belfast with an Abbey. But Yeats proved more interested in telling Coulter about the phases of the moon. When the eruption of civil war ended any hope of establishing a professional theatre in Ulster, he moved to London and began to work for the BBC, writing plays and reporting on tennis matches, yet continuing to edit *The Ulster Review*. In 1927 he became managing editor of *The New Adelphi* under John Middleton Murry, and the pages of his memoirs describing that journal are some of his shrewdest and most acute. Murry, an "obsessed moralist" whom he characterizes as "the most elusive, subtly complex person I have ever met," comes across more sympathetically than he does in most accounts of the period, where he's often dismissed as a vulture who preyed on Katherine Mansfield, a rat who preyed on D. H. Lawrence, or both. Coulter resisted the temptation to become a disciple, but he never lost respect for Murry's intellect, character and critical discernment.

Coulter left England in 1936 only for the purpose of marriage. In London he had fallen in love with a Canadian, Olive Primrose, but when she revisited Toronto she was found to be suffering from TB, and the doctors forbade travel. Rather than remaining in England alone, Coulter chose to emigrate. The chapters on his life in Canada between 1936 and 1951 are among the most valuable of *In My Day*, for they record the cultural maturing of a nation. He was a leading member of the Toronto Arts and Letters Club and a founder of the Canadian Arts Council, and although his efforts to win support for a national theatre came to nothing, he did help to persuade his old friend Tyrone Guthrie to visit Ontario and begin the Stratford Festival. These were productive years for Coulter, the years during which his work found its widest audience. But in 1951, encouraged by the interest shown in his plays by the Bristol Old Vic, the Glasgow Citizens' Theatre, the Abbey Theatre in Dublin and the Arts Theatre in London, he and his family returned to England. The interest remained theoretical, and when he went back to Toronto in 1958 his own energies had diminished and Canada's attention lay elsewhere. At the age of seventy he was reduced to writing propaganda for Ontario Hydro.

"Bitterness", he once said, "is the sin you must not commit against yourself, or it will seep into all you do". It seeps into many passages of *In My Day*, particularly when Coulter discusses the oblivion into which most of his work has fallen. Of his twenty-four plays, fewer than half have been given a professional production. He is ungrieved about the fate of a verse-play, *Sleep, My Pretty One*, which was bought by Laurence Olivier, rehearsed by Irene Worth, praised by Bette Davis, and performed by none of them. His adroit adaptation of *Oblomov*, though broadcast on television and radio in several countries and translated into a dozen languages, has never received a professional stage performance in Ireland, England, Canada or the USA. *The Drums Are Out* (reminiscent of early O'Casey) was a sellout and a critical success at the Abbey in 1948, but its promised revival never came. And so on. Coulter had bad timing and worse luck, yet it must be said that he never found a unique idiom or vision. His lack of success, lack of stability and lack of complacency drove him to explore widely different modes of theatre, and if he rarely repeated his mistakes he rarely learned from his achievements. He was, perhaps, one of those artists whom failure begins to vitiate.

Perhaps, too, the price he paid for exile was uncertainty about his own voice. In the words of Mavor Moore, the present chairman of the Canada Council, "its basic tragedy was that of the uprooted man". It was one of his greatest misfortunes that *Riel*, the tragedy of another uprooted man, demands physical resources so great and a leading actor so good that its performances have been far too rare. Moreover, the Irish theatre has shown as little interest in Coulter's Canadian plays as the Canadian theatre has shown in his Irish plays. But in defiance of the indifference of producers, Coulter kept on working till the end. In 1979 and 1980 he wrote two new plays about love and revised an earlier script, *A Capful of Pennies*, about Edmund Kean. His memory spans nine decades, and the first memory in them is characteristic: "the cobbled stable-yard and a goldy-brown pile of manure against a white-washed wall". Later he quotes the mocking adage, "Live horse and you'll get oats!" For ninety-two years Coulter lived horse, and his spirit never broke. In its bravery, perseverance and dedication to art, no matter how spasmodic the rewards, his life became exemplary. Whether struggling in London or struggling in Toronto, he was among the most indomitable of Irishry.

Against the philistines

By Fleur Adcock

Beginnings: New Zealand Writers Tell How They Began Writing
118pp. Oxford University Press. £4.95.
0 19 558053 2

CHARLES BRASCH:
Indirections
A Memoir 1909-1947
433pp. Oxford University Press. £17.50.
0 19 558050 8

Janet Frame and her little sisters cast themselves as the Brontës: "with a background of poverty, drunkenness, attempted murder and near-madness, it was inevitable that we should feel close to them", she writes. Not all of the contributors to this volume had such painfully dramatic origins to contend with, but most of those who were either not born outsiders were made so either by circumstances or by their own choice (Frank Sargeson, for example, left his solicitor's job to work part-time on a farm).

The result was literature. At nineteen Maurice Duggan, standing on the platform at the back of a tram because he had not yet mastered the mechanics of bending his new artificial leg at the knee, was handed a white feather. His mates were away at the war; he had turned to books because, after all, "I could read, couldn't I", so he began filling pages with stories. James K. Baxter, persecuted at school much as his Conscientious Objector parents were persecuted by their neighbours, found that his experiences "created a gap in which the poems were able to grow". Janet Frame fled to London to avoid lifelong confinement in mental hospitals and was told by a doctor there "Why conform? I think you need to write to survive."

These essays were commissioned by Charles Brasch, who in 1947 founded *Landfall*, New Zealand's first literary quarterly, and edited it until 1966: they are introduced here by the editor of the rival quarterly *Islands*, which is now running a second series of "Beginnings". He points to the role played by sympathetic mothers in the lives of young people brought up against the philistine, male-dominated society of inter-war New Zealand, and to the general impression of perseverance against odds. Another common factor, natural to youthful writers in any society, is secrecy: Bruce Mason calls his arcane scribblings under a flaxbush "a secret and guilty joy"; masturbation, no less.

That art should begin in isolation, in secrecy, and in the face of hostility or contempt is not surprising; but that six of the nine New Zealand-born writers here included (the other contributors are an Englishman and the painter Colin McCahon) should have suffered serious illness is surely a statistic worth examining. Baxter is the only notable member of the group not to have been so afflicted, and he was an alcoholic, which seemed to him a fair enough substitute.

Brasch commissioned more "Beginnings" than he published, and he hoped they would "act as a spur and encouragement to other writers, especially the young". Possibly his inclination was towards writers who had overcome severe difficulties; certainly an equal number of New Zealanders of this generation (his own) grew up to be poets or novelists without ill-health or accident. Individually, these accounts show interestingly varied attitudes to their authors' experiences: humility, resentment, gratitude, surprise. Collectively, they amount to a batch of moral tales, and have illuminating things to say about New Zealand's social history as well as about the literary vocation.

Charles Brasch's own beginnings, up to the time when he had conceived and was about to embark upon the publication of *Landfall*, make a striking contrast to these accounts of hardship and precarious survival, although in his own very different circumstances he had problems enough: "That struggle for breath seems now symptomatic" he wrote (of childhood asthma which he outgrew); "living was never afterwards to come to me easily". It was not ill-health which hampered him.

The story is told in his posthumous memoir, edited by his friend James Bertram and much reduced from the very long manuscript which Brasch had been quietly and partially to revise when he died in 1973. He was born into a German Jewish family whose forebears had made their way to Australia and New Zealand in the nineteenth century; they were energetic, successful in business and, by the time Charles was born in 1909, wealthy. His mother died before he was five, and in the face of his father's evident disappointment with the shy, bookish son who showed no interest in the family firm, Charles turned increasingly to his maternal grandfather, Willi Fels, the "rock and centre" of his life. Fels was a man of many enthusiasms: a shrewd scholar, a botanist, a connoisseur and collector with a particular interest in Maori culture, a generous and expert benefactor to the Otago Museum. He loved and trusted his grandson without demanding that he should prove to justify himself; this memoir ends with his death.

Brasch was slow to find his métier. He knew that he wanted to be a poet, but "if you're a poet, you must have a message" said his father, and young Charles took many years to learn that this was nonsense. Meanwhile he went to Oxford, joined an archaeological dig in Egypt, travelled widely in Europe, and made friends with writers, painters and musicians. Drifting in his case was not accompanied by poverty; he was cushioned by family money, although it hurt him that he had not enough to help struggling friends. But a private income could not console him for the aimlessness of these years.

In 1936, however, he was invited to teach at a small, unconventional school for disturbed children, and thus discovered his natural sympathy with the young, later to be so valuable in his editorial work: he was admirably sensitive to talent in young writers and helpful in fostering it. (When he briefly visited New Zealand in 1938 the poet Ursula Bethell advised him to give up writing and find "patron"—which in fact he eventually became, almost secretly organizing fellowships and endowments for all branches of the arts, without, however, ceasing to write.)

Indirections is a record of Brasch's family (aunts, cousins and nephews as well as Grandfather), his friendships (with Denis Glover, Robin Hyde, Tosi Woollaston, E. J. Scovell, Frederick and Eve Page among many others); his gradual process of self-education and self-discovery, and his eventual commitment to New Zealand rather than to the Europe for which his tastes and personality seemed more naturally suited. He spent the war years in England, working first as a fire watcher and then in the Foreign Office Intelligence Centre at Bletchley Park) but, like several of his expatriate friends, he began to feel drawn to New Zealand once more. He loved the landscape of the South Island, as his poems witness, and admired a few brave people working as pioneers in the arts; but there were also the "usual slovenly spiritless New Zealand voices", the parochialism, and "the general distrust of people who have travelled and lived abroad and developed their own standards".

Certain passages in *Indirections* make Brasch sound snobbish or cold; but he was neither. He was a reticent man, not without being detached (he found it a painful combination), but modest, sympathetic and generous. This book, noted though it is, certainly does not tell all.

Fête Champêtre

This bourgeois clematis-bower
might be a wallpaper by Vuillard –
pink stars jotted down
on a dense scribble of green –

or some high, abrupt stage-flat;
hands have heaved out
to signify the end of the garden.
The annual rustication

of our indoor properties
proceeds, with random babies,
a quorum of florid aunts,
help and hindrance

over the tea-things. We carry
Windsor chairs in our obligatory
stagger across grass. A white cloth
flares, undulates, lacks breath.

then subsides to a wonky plateau
on which, like billets-doux,
minute sandwiches are to convey...
But listen! here comes a trio

of chimp cups, pale bone,
absorbing the unaccustomed sun
and celebrating with a feeble
percussion. Hardly audible:

somebody lingering indoors
extorts a few lines
from the dud piano – a perfect
prelude to whatever next.

Christopher Reid

The novelist at the blackboard

By John Simon

VLADIMIR NABOKOV:
Lectures on Literature
Edited by Fredson Bowers
Introduction by John Updike
385pp. Weidenfeld and Nicolson. £12.50.
0 297 77852 8

Vladimir Nabokov, who appreciated artfully layered constructions and perceived all art as a fusion of layers in the time-and-space-defying eyes of the great writer and good reader, would have applauded the publishing of his college lectures in *Lectures on Literature* – indeed, he planned to publish them himself. Here, if ever, is a book to be experienced on several levels. To begin with, it is a reading of *Mansfield Park, Bleak House, Madame Bovary, Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde, Swann's Way, Metamorphosis*, and *Ulysses* (the Russian novels that were also part of Nabokov's teaching repertoire will be published in a second volume) by an important novelist who was also an ingenious, albeit highly idiosyncratic critic. It is, next, an evaluation of great—and, in one case, decently minor—novelists by one who was easily the equal of Stevenson, and believed himself the equal of all.

This is, furthermore, a teaching book, and shows us Nabokov the pedagogue, scholar, and annotator, not unlike (in fact, very much like) such characters of his own devising as Pnin, Charles Kinbote, John Ray, Jr, PhD, and the compiler of that vast set of notes to the translation of *Eugene Onegin*. Finally, there is a good deal of self-revelation here: *Lectures on Literature* tells us about as much of Nabokov's likes and dislikes in the art of writing as *Speak, Memory* tells us of his predilections and antipathies in the business of living. There may be even a further level, almost coincidental but not negligible: a refresher course in some magisterial fiction.

To start with the most obvious aspect of the book: Nabokov was a learned, meticulous, fascinating, erratic, and frustrating teacher. A great actor, he would read out—indeed, perform—large chunks of the novels under discussion, thus also saving on the number of original pearls he had to cast before the students. In between the readings came critical evaluations that were often based on chalked-up chronological charts, maps, diagrams, illustrations of how Gregor Samsa looked as a beetle or what sort of orchids Swann's Odette wore—anything that would amuse the literary detective, entomologist, collector of ephemera and curiosities, and creator of worlds elsewhere that was the lecturer.

Nabokov recommends here, "not as a writer's prison but merely as a fixed address, the much abused ivory tower"; in the *Paris Review* interview, however, asked to evaluate his teaching experience at Cornell, he answered: "A first-rate college library with a comfortable campus around it is a fine milieu for a writer. There is of course the problem of educating the young." Nabokov wrote out his lectures, as his former student, Ross Wetzsteon tells us, "word for word, down to the wryest asides", and, except for minor improvements here and there, never changed them. I suspect that his merry suggestion to have them delivered via tape recorder was not meant to be taken altogether as a joke. As it is, his wife, Vera, who for seventeen years at Wells, Wellesley, and Cornell sat in the front row of all of his classes, typed up his lecture notes, graded his students' papers, and chauffeured him around. So teaching for Nabokov was mostly educating himself. Studying up on *Ulysses*, he told his obsequious Boswell, Alfred Appel, Jr, was the best part of the education he received at Cornell.

Of the one lecture by Nabokov I caught, when he was guest lecturer at Harvard, I remember only two things: that *Anna Karenina* should really be *Anna Karenin* in English, and that although the lecturer was not against English translations of Russian novels, he preferred them to be diamond rather than Garnett. Still, he must have been a fascinating teacher, what with his dapper appearance, cosmopolitan accent, sophisticated histrionics, and his jokes and word games plying their propaedeutic magic. Coming upon the word "embargo", Nabokov tells his admiring class that, read backward, it spells "O grab me!". In *Bleak House*, "the Dedlocks, I am sorry to say, are as dead as doornails or door locks (the Dead locks are dead)"—though perhaps they are not quite so inert as this elaborately set up dud of a pun. After the phrase "portable hell", comes the jovial reminder, "this is Mr. Nabokov, not Mr. Dickens". Flaubert would write about "eighty to ninety pages in one year—that is a fellow after my heart!". Scott Moncrieff "died while translating [Proust's] work, which is no wonder". "The typesetter of the great Joyce is the godfather of the tiny Mr. [E. E.] Cummings." Kindly Leopold Bloom "even feeds seagulls, which I personally consider to be nasty birds with drunkard's eyes". And so on.

Some of the heartiest jokes are at the expense of despised writers or respected competitors. "The sociological side [of Dickens], brilliantly stressed for example by Edmund Wilson . . . is neither interesting nor important"; "Lady Dedlock is redeemed by suffering, and Dostoevski is wildly gesticulating in the background"; compared to Kafka, Rilke and Thomas Mann are "dwarfs or plaster saints"; Swinburne is identified as "an English post-romantic minor poet"; Freud, the blackest of *bêtes noires*, is a "medieval witch doctor"; and there is a passing reference to "one bore, a man called Stuart Gilbert".

Along with this studied denigration comes also ingenuous self-praise. "Every artist is a manner of saint (I feel that very clearly myself) . . ". "I cannot imagine (and that is saying a good deal) . . .". "Gregor [Samsa] never found out he had wings". Nabokov informs his class—which, though perhaps an entomological truth, is a critical irrelevance—and continued, "This is a very nice observation on my part to be treasured all your lives. Some Gregors, some Joes and Janes, do not know that they have wings." There is no question that Saint Vladimir had little doubt about his own strong opinions and pinions. But what did his winged words do to his students? In the introduction, John Updike tells us about his wife, who took Nabokov's Literature 311-312 (known on campus as "Dirty Lit."), that "she cannot to this day take Thomas Mann seriously".

And how does Nabokov perform here as an interpreter and evaluator of his chosen writers? Not very well on Jane Austen, whom he picked at Edmund Wilson's insistence. He enjoys some of her ironies, pays a wan compliment to her feel for the *mot juste*, makes up some curious critical terminology ("knight's move", "dimpled prose") for her "collection of eggshells in cotton wool", and finally dismisses her in a palinode at the start of his Dickens lectures: "I dislike porcelain and the minor arts . . .". But at least *Mansfield Park*, as he said elsewhere, was an excuse to read or reread, and to inflict on the students, works mentioned by the characters in the novel, with the result "I think I had more fun than my class."



Partly, I suppose, because Vladimir Senior used to read Dickens in English out loud to his family, Vladimir Junior is much more at home in *Bleak House* than he was in *Mansfield Park*. He is especially good on the way local colour—nature, cityscapes, weather—is tied in with individual personalities, and on the theme of abused but heroically coping children. Rightly, I think, he expostulated: "I should not like to hear the charge of sentimentality made against this strain that runs through *Bleak House*." I want to submit that people who denounce the sentimental are generally unaware of what sentiment is." And he insists that the death of little Jo "is a lesson in style, not in participative emotion".

But it is with Flaubert that Nabokov comes into his own, and here he makes some quite surprising points, such as the demonstration that *Madame Bovary* is in many respects neither realistic nor naturalistic, that "in point of fact, all fiction is fiction. All art is deception." What Flaubert has created is a (very Nabokovian) "world of fancy with its own logic", and *Madame Bovary* is not "a landmark of so-called realism, whatever that is". Nabokov is at great pains to show that the "romantic" world of Emma and her lovers is just as bourgeois and nearly as crass as that of the more obviously middle-class and materialistic characters, and that the only ones who rise above it are little Justin and, in his final ability to forgive and dumbly love on, poor Charles.

For Nabokov, as for his father before him, Flaubert is the supreme master; without him, there would have been no Proust and Joyce ("despite superficial innovations, Joyce has [not] gone any further than Flaubert"), and even Chekhov "would not have been quite Chekhov". It is quite a comedown to go from *Madame Bovary* to *Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde*. Presumably the Stevenson novella (which Wilson advised him against) appealed to Nabokov—though he doesn't say so—because of the theme of the double, or rather the hero's living antithesis, in this case residing in the same body. It is as if Humbert Humbert and Clare Quilty were the same person, which, in a sense, they are even in Nabokov. Certainly our professor is unable to make a very compelling case for Stevenson's greatness, despite all the street plans and house façades he draws for his students (the bipartite Jekyll-Hyde residence is an architectural analogue for the dual protagonist) and makes them copy. He insists on the artistry with which Stevenson (whose name he sometimes misspells as "Stephenson") creates an atmosphere that makes the implausibilities of his story believable and allows it to have "the impact of satisfactory and artistic reality". This phrase is prototypical of Nabokov's artistic philosophy: a novel is real because it has a satisfactory *semblance* of reality, because that semblance is achieved by artistic (artful) means, and because the whole produces the right impact on the reader. But Nabokov is also aware of Stevenson's weaknesses, and this section reads at times like an uneasy apologia.

With *A la Recherche du temps perdu*, for which he rightly rejects Scott Moncrieff's now unfortunately unreplaceable English title, Nabokov is in his element again. *In Search of Lost Time* is "the greatest novel of the first half of the twentieth century", which, we should recall, is the half that did not produce *Lolita, Pnin, Pale Fire*, and *Ada*. He expatiates helpfully on the ability of Proust "to fill in and stretch out the sentence to its utmost breadth and length . . . in verbal generosity he is a veritable Santa". And, again, he calls attention to the important fact that "Proust's conversation and his descriptions merge into one another creating a new unity where flower and leaf and insect belong to the same blossoming tree". Though he denies having the slightest interest in biographical criticism, he interprets certain of Proust's fictional strategies in terms of the author's homosexuality. There are many fine insights here, but the section ends lamely, perhaps because Nabokov (with some justification) felt that he could assign only the first volume of the huge novel to his students. Even though he does bring in references to and conclusions from other parts of the work, his analyses are largely limited to the actual assignment.

On Kafka's *Metamorphosis*, Nabokov is less interesting than on the other works, possibly because it is the only book he did not read in the original: despite the many years spent in Berlin, he never learned German thoroughly, as he regretfully admits. Nevertheless, he does make some amusing entomological points: "Neither Gregor nor Kafka saw beetle any too clearly"; and he proceeds to show that the creature is no cockroach; we also get such homely historical sidelights as "in Prague, 1912, it was much more difficult to clean and cook than in Ithaca, 1954"; not to mention such odd Nabokovian idiosyncrasies as the opinion that "music, as perceived by its consumers, belongs to a more primitive, more animal form in the scale of arts than literature or painting".

On *Ulysses*, which gets the longest treatment, Nabokov is good, though he deliberately underplays the importance of symbols, is unduly unreceptive to Joyce's wild humour, and repeatedly complains of the book's scatology and obscenity with a prissiness worthy of Pnin. There is a very fine explication of how the stream of consciousness works, a genuine feeling for the characters, an infectious appreciation of how the topography, the city, colours the action. There is also an interesting, though perhaps not entirely convincing, demonstration that the mysterious man in the brown mackintosh is Joyce himself; a provocative assertion that Molly's and Leopold's interior monologues "exaggerate the verbal side of thought"; and a disparagement, correct to my mind, of *Finnegans Wake* as "one of the greatest failures in literature", although the ambiguity of "greatest" in this context, necessary to my mind, was not intended by Nabokov. Here, too, there is the one obvious misreading Nabokov commits when he assumes that Buck Mulligan, on the first page of the novel, "tells God to switch off the current". He is, of course, talking to Haines.

The concluding lecture, entitled "The Art of Literature and Commonsense", is particularly rich in revelations about Nabokov's attitudes toward literature and the nature and role of the writer. Most interesting is the notion that criminals are people lacking imagination; if they had a creative fantasy, it "would have led them to seek an outlet in fiction and make the characters in their books do more thoroughly what they might themselves have bungled in real life". Even more provocative is a passage asserting that "a creative writer . . . cannot help feeling that in his rejecting the world of the matter-of-fact, in his taking sides with the irrational, the illogical, the inexplicable and the fundamentally good, he is performing something similar in a rudimentary way to what—". Here the sentence breaks off: the manuscript pages are missing. Similar in a rudimentary way to whom, one wonders. God, I suspect, somewhat in the manner of that Flaubertian statement about the writer's godlike, invisible

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13 Bedford Square, London WC1B 3JF.

omnipresence in his book—an ideal that, according to Nabokov, Flaubert did not truly achieve in *Madame Bovary*. Now, if I interpret the fragment correctly, and if we assimilate it to Nabokov's preceding statement, we get his vision of the writer as a divine criminal or, better, a criminal god.

One of the earliest pronouncements in *Lectures on Literature* proclaims that "great novels are great fairy tales"; Nabokov's former students, like his present readers, are constantly reminded that the greatest folly is to seek psychological or historical reality in a work of the imagination, to read it for moral, existential, social, political—in short, general—ideas, rather than as a specific aesthetic construct, the work of an enchanter, a maker of riddles equipped with elegant solutions. Only a child, Nabokov insists, asks whether a story is true: "literature is of no practical value whatsoever, except in the very special case of somebody's wishing to become, of all things, a professor of literature". But Nabokov does demand, for all his rejection of crude reality—"those farcical and fraudulent characters called Facts"—a powerful semblance of reality, which, as he himself might have put it, is not the same as a resemblance. As he said in an interview, unless you know the streets of Joyce's Dublin and what the semi-sleeping car on the Petersburg-Moscow express looked like in 1870, you cannot make sense of *Ulysses* and *Anna Kareulu(a)*. In other words, the writer makes use of some specific realities, but only as bait with which to trap the readers into the greater unreality—or greater reality—of his fiction.

The true work of literature has "The Precision of Poetry and the Excitement of Science [Nabokov's capitalization]", we are told here. His ex-student Ross Wetzsteon remembers the phrase as "the passion of the scientist and the precision of the artist". At other times, Nabokov called it "the passion of science and the patience of poetry" or "the precision of poetry and the excitement of pure science". In any of its forms, this leitmotif of the novelist-lepidopterist insists not only on the interpenetration of these seemingly contrary disciplines, but also on the paradoxical nature of each: on the scientific nature of artistic creation, and on the heatedness rather than coldness of science. Yet when he tries to describe to his students what is art, he can do no better than invoke "the telltale tingle between the shoulder blades. . . . It is no use reading a book at all if you do not read it with your back." This theory of literature is a kissing kin to A. E. Housman's definition of poetry as what, when thought of during shaving, makes the skin bristle and the razor inoperative—a sensation whose seat is in the pit of the stomach. But Housman at least has the excuse of never having impaled a butterfly or claimed to be a scientist.

"*Beauty plus pity*—this is the closest we can get to a definition of art", Nabokov tells his students at the beginning of his lectures on Kafka, and he does track down a good deal of pity in the works he discusses. Thus Leopold Bloom's "keen compassion for man-degraded, man-injured animals" impresses the impaler of butterflies; I cited earlier his defence of little Jo's death scene and of Charles Bovary's dumb animal-like love for Emma. *Lectures on Literature* shows us a Nabokov more human, if not exactly humane, than we get from the novels, the interviews, and such caustic evaluations as Frank Kermode's ("He can sit . . . like the saints enjoying the torments of the damned") or D. J. Enright's ("This author, rich in what is given to few writers and poor in what is given to most men . . ."); indeed, we come across the statement, "I take my hat off to the hero who dashes into a burning house and saves his neighbor's child; but I shake his hand if he has risked squandering a precious five seconds to find and save, together with the child, its favorite toy."

This sounds eminently humane, but is it? I suspect that Nabokov admires the saving of the toy more than the saving of the child, because the toy is an artifact related to "those wonderful toys—literary masterpieces" he refers to in "L'Envoi", his annual peroration to his class, in which he also tells them that "the twinkle in the author's eye" when he catches out the murderer or tyrant in his imbecility or vulgarity "punishes your man more surely than the pistol of a tiptoeing conspirator". This would be a hard idea to sell to the victims entering the Nazi crematoria; it is giving art a presumed moral and social efficacy that the old art-for-artists (Nabokov's word) had the good sense not to impute to it.

Still, as Updike in the Introduction quotes an ex-student as saying, "Nabokov was a great teacher not because he taught the subject well but because he exemplified, and stimulated in his students, a profound and loving attitude toward it." Yes, and with his customary zeal for artistic perfection, Nabokov tried to make these lectures, too, as artistic as can be. The fine editing of them, despite the incompleteness, repetitiveness, and disorganized state in which they were found, by Fredson Bowers, and the inclusion of Nabokov's drawings, maps, chronological tables, and, above all, photographic reproductions of some of them, along with the marginalia with which Nabokov annotated his teaching copies of the texts, reveal to us the solicitude, the felicitous emendations, as well as the pedantry that went into what he considered the painful, nerve-racking chore of teaching. (In another way, of course, he enjoyed the showmanship of it.)

The pedantry is always there. Nabokov cannot cite a novel mentioned in a book he is teaching without gratuitously giving the date of its composition; he will even draw a supererogatory series of diagrams showing how Jekyll's and Hyde's personalities overlap—something that could be explained in one diagrammless sentence; he provides an artful and accomplished drawing of the type of orchid Swann bestowed on Odette. Could that be as important for the understanding of *A la recherche* as the street plan of Dublin for that of *Ulysses*? Sometimes he writes instructions to himself or his class in Russian, for example the unduly fussy "Open your book!". At other times, he puts accent marks on difficult English words, so that he won't mispronounce them: in "chorister", he puts a *k* over the *ch*, and an accent over the *o*; in "corpuscle", he places parentheses around the second *c*. Despite the now popular belief in his infallible command of English, he makes mistakes: he speaks of killing two birds with a "rock", and perpetrates this sentence: "Who else in the book do we have as good people?" And there are puns that the most dedicated paronomasiast would find it hard to love, as when, apropos Freudian interpretations of *Metamorphosis*, he says, "I am interested here in bugs, not in humbugs." But the care with which he corrects the mistakes in the available English translations of *Madame Bovary* and *A la recherche* is exemplary, and I am delighted to find him worrying about the *mot juste*, as when he says of the latter novel that it "is a treasure hunt where the treasure is time and the archipelago is the past", and then carefully amends "archipelago" to "hiding place".

Yet perhaps the biggest surprise these lectures hold is Nabokov's ability to gush. We catch him referring to "the divine poetry of [Shakespeare's] fantastically great tragedies", or exclaiming about Joyce, "How beautifully the man writes!" or piously pontificating about *Ulysses*, "One thing leads to another in this marvellous book!" One thing leads to another in any book, marvellous or not; but the gush becomes cloyingly sentimental in a statement such as "'goodness' is something round and creamy, and beautifully flushed, something in a clean apron with warm bare arms that have nursed and comforted us . . .". Is it possible that Vladimir Nabokov, the arch-enemy of that middle-class sentiment and middle-brow sensibility that he tirelessly ridiculed under its Russian name, *poshlost*, was capable of a little of it himself? Certainly *Lectures on Literature* affords glimpses of his professorial, avuncular, chattily playful sides, only intermittently crisscrossed by that megalomania that made William F. Gass wonder "why he's never signed his books with a large and simple *N*. It was good enough for Napoleon . . .".

And then came the success of *Lolita*, affluence, and deliverance from pedagogic drudgery. A dirty little girl put an end to Dirty Lit.



A prince before the kiss, or a figure for people who like imaginary gardens with real toads in them – this costume for a toad by Lila de Nobili and Rostislav Doboujinsky, from the Royal Ballet's 1968 production of The Sleeping Beauty, *is in "Spotlight: Four Centuries of Ballet Costumes", an exhibition which can be seen at the Victoria and Albert Museum until July 26.*

Fixatedly feminizing

By Peter Kemp

ELLEN CRONAN ROSE:
The Novels of Margaret Drabble
Equivocal Figures
141pp. Macmillan. £12.
0 333 28568 9

On the cover of Ellen Cronan Rose's book, *The Novels of Margaret Drabble*, is a trick drawing. Seen in one way, the author explains, it resembles "a beautiful young woman"; seen in another "an aged crone". Drabble's novels, she believes, can likewise be viewed in two ways. Behind their apparent meaning is a "hidden agenda of women's liberation", visible to the initiated eye, "it all depends on your vantage point" – and Ms Rose's is the embattled perch of the feminist.

Her book – adding further spines to that two-faced picture – reveals more of her than it does of Margaret Drabble. This is not only on account of the confessional effusions so customary in feminist expositions. "In 1972 I was an anorexic housewife . . . by 1974 I had a divided, a Ph.D. . . . I have come more and more to value my worth as a scholar and as a person who is also a woman". Continually, too, Drabble's novels are distorted to fit Rose's fantasies.

Her treatment of *The Garrick Year* is a case in point. Eager to recruit its heroine, Emma, as a member of the anorexics-for-autonomy brigade, Ms Rose obsessively scrutinizes her snacks and nibblings; pounces on supposedly give-away moments like some "fiddling" with a *sole Véronique*; and serves up her findings with a heavy seasoning of psychiatric commentary. Despite this – as Emma calmly eats her way through chops, potatoes, spaghetti, pork pies, bacon, eggs, lamb stew, and three helpings of chocolate mousse – Ms Rose has difficulty in reducing her to a pathological starveling. Similarly perverse is the attempt to establish her as sexually abnormal. Hearing of a friend's suicide by drowning, Emma reflects on how the need to protect her womb has made her determined to survive: "I have two children, and you will not find me at the bottom of any river". Whereupon, Ms Rose jumps in with the observation that – as "wetness . . . is the essence of female sexuality" – Emma's refusal to go under is clear evidence that she "will not accept her sexuality".

Inventive readings of this kind are supplemented by re-writings. One of the things Ms Rose dislikes about Drabble's later novels is that "occasional use of a male narrator. Anthony Keating's phallocentric vision" in *The Ice Age* comes in for disapproving comment. And, with *The Needle's Eye*, impatience with the male narrator's similarly cock-eyed view of life drives Ms Rose to push him aside and insert passages of fervid hypothesis as to how much better the novel would have been "had it been narrated from the point of view of Rose's friend, Emily": "I can imagine another conversation between Rose and Emily . . . Emily doubtless would not only have understood but encouraged Rose", etc.

What Ms Rose requires of Margaret Drabble is not fiction but propaganda, as her final sentence makes starkly apparent: "I want her next novel to be . . . an unequivocally feminist blueprint". In keeping with this proselytizing harangue pervades the book. With earnest fervour, Ms Rose heaps her pages with quotations from feminist scripture (*Beyond God the Father*, *Womanspirit Rising*, *New Women/New Earth*). De Beauvoir's *The Second Sex* – whose broodings on female "alterity" and "imminence" crop up repetitiously – is an especial favourite. But evangelical zeal has led Ms Rose much further afield. Those are arresting bulletins from "the frontiers of feminist thinking" and the novel disciplines that are emerging there – like "feminist theology" (whose leading exponents include a Ms Christ) or "gyn/ecology" ("the science of women's discovering the complex web of interrelationships between organisms and their environment"). This latter discipline, it is explained, should on no account be confused with gynaecology, "a profession . . . dominated by men . . . which seeks to dominate women" and "depends upon fixation and dismemberment". Fixation is what Ellen Cronan Rose displays, behind her critical dismemberments, in an urge to dominate Margaret Drabble's novels.

Eternally eavesdropping

By C. H. Sisson

A. D. NUTTALL:
Overheard by God
Fiction and Prayer in Herbert, Milton, Dante and St. John
147pp. Methuen. £8.95.
0 416 73980 6

That an omniscient God should hear what we say is perhaps not a very novel or striking idea. We thought it was so. To be "overheard by God", however, suggests something more—or perhaps something less. For it implies that God has no right to listen, as if he were some eavesdropper like Mercury, rather than the God of Judaeo-Christian tradition. It is certainly some sort of comic figure that A. D. Nuttall starts off with—a reading spirit, it seems, for

> this study begins with an intuition that for much of our older literature one may suppose the presence of an extra (inhuman) reader: that which is written for man is always and necessarily read by God. The bourgeois marriage of poet and reader which now dominates literature and criticism was once infiltrated by a third party

—a curious way of putting the matter: most said he was there all the time. In any case, the ability to read must be so small a part of omniscience that the sally gives a false orientation at once. For the God of George Herbert was not a textual critic but the one to whom "all hearts are open, all desires known, and from whom no secrets are hid". Though Professor Nuttall imagines that Herbert "would fight like a tiger against every word!" he has written about him, my own view of the matter is that though he might not have agreed, he would have been benign.

Nuttall helpfully tells us, on the penultimate page of his book, that he writes "as one brought up by unbelieving parents in an unbelieving culture", and "true to that nurture and that culture by mature conviction". A conservative of unbelief, evidently, and a chip off the two old blocks. This shows indeed the book illustrates at many points the fact that while those with some Christian training come without difficulty to share in our sceptical tradition, which is after all post-Christian, those who have been shielded from the Christian faith find it hard to know what they have missed. It is not that Nuttall has not read his books on the subject: he has read in particular some of Calvin. But it is clear that he thinks of the Christian religion as a series of propositions to be assented to (or not) rather than as a reading of the facts of life. He makes all too much, in considering Herbert, of a few propositions of Calvin, and all too little of Herbert's way of life and his ordinary devotions. To put it no higher, the Book of Common Prayer and Herbert's own *Country Parson* throw as much light on the poems of *The Temple* as *Institutes* could do.

Whereas Nuttall's mind tends to work like a computer, of two alternatives accepting one and sending the other into limbo that is not the case with Herbert's or indeed Dante's. (There is a chapter on the third canto of the *Paradiso*.) Herbert cannot be caught out by the paradox of "Nay, even to trust in him was also his" because that paradox is at the heart of the Christian religion. Nuttall says "it paralyses both poetry and prayer". But the fact, however disconcerting, are that prayer, involving the same sort of trust have been used through centuries and that Herbert, paralysed though he is said to have been, did write *The Temple*. It would be unkind to take up Nuttall's suggestion, elsewhere in the book, that his own "line of thought . . . is that of a fairly bright schoolboy of sixteen", but perhaps he is sometimes a little too smart. He has an interesting discussion of polite plural-for-singular pronouns ("they" as well as "you"), and illustrates it from Wyatt's marvellous "They flie from me that sometyme did me seke". We are asked to believe categorically that "the reference throughout is . . . to one girl" which is perhaps pushing a good theory a little too hard. When we find that a reading of St John's gospel has led Nuttall to the conclusion "that Jesus was mad", perhaps we are entitled to think that he is too full of his own fleas to be a very good critic.

However that may be, this book, which is careful up to a point and clever in a point somewhere beyond that, does raise important questions as to how far a lack of contact with the historical church is already making it difficult for people to read the older literature—and it is of course the whole fibre of the literature that is threatened, not just the overtly religious parts. One would, for example, hardly begin to get the feel of Swift if one did not understand something of his roots in the church, and Chaucer and Shakespeare themselves must lose some colours for those quite outside the frontiers of history of Christianity. The cultural depravity of the churches themselves is of course doing much to encourage the dissociation between them and literature. If only the Authorized Version of the Bible could be read in all schools, as it was until recently, that would be something. It ought, indeed, to provide the basic education in English. For those who are studying English literature in sixth forms or in universities, some acquaintance with the Book of Common Prayer should be compulsory. This is bound to raise hackles among those for whom the book is to be classed as reactionary reading, but they should be encouraged by the fact that the Church of England apparently now hates it.

Short changing

By Patricia Craig

SUNITI NAMJOSHI:
Feminist Fables
122pp. Sheba Feminist Publishers. £2.25.
0 907179 04 5

Feminist anxieties about the content of many traditional rhymes and tales — "Georgie Porgie", "Cinderella", "The Sleeping Beauty", and so on — have resulted in some retelling, some recollecting and some redressing (all brought together in Alison Lurie's *Clever Gretchen and Other Forgotten Folktales* for children, published last year). It's understandable that all the recurring images of feminine passivity (available in abundance once they were looked for) should have aroused some resentment; however, not all the amended versions of old stories are as complex or illuminating as those which appear in one remarkable collection, Angela Carter's *The Bloody Chamber* (1979) — the title story based on the Bluebeard legend. Ms Carter's book showed how effectively the existing material of folklore might be put to new purposes, both imaginative and social.

In Suniti Namjoshi's hands, Bluebeard's bloody chamber is transformed into "A Room of His Own"; this particular retelling has a light touch which threatens occasionally to become facetious. On the whole, however, her method is satisfactorily humorous and succinct, and the moral point which is a prerequisite of the form is rarely laboured. The fable is an artful story, usually very short, "devised to convey some useful lesson" (as the Oxford Dictionary puts it). Feminist precepts, like any others, may be embodied appropriately in this form. Kipling wrote: :

> When all the world would keep a matter hid,
> Since truth is seldom friend to any crowd,
> Men write in fable, as old Aesop did,
> Jesting at that which none will name aloud . . .

That last line, incidentally, gives a clue to one of Suniti Namjoshi's preoccupations: her fables are just as often lesbian as feminist, and when they are a sentimental element is allowed in. In "A Moral Tale", for example: "The Beast wasn't a nobleman. The Beast was a woman. That's why its love for Beauty was so monstrous". This seems an unjustifiable tampering with the original theme. "The Moon Shone On" might have been a skit on the more vapid kind of popular song, but isn't: "When she fell in love . . . She wanted to sing, but there were no songs, at least none she might sing to another woman". Where, you might ask, is the feminist astringency that characterizes the best of these stories? Sacrificed, alas, to an affirmation of wholehearted feeling.

A tiresome ingenuousness is discernible at times — in "A Quiet Life", for instance, when the person who finds "being human . . . too hard" disguises herself as a fake woman: "It worked well". "Logic", too, shows that undue simplification is a self-defeating technique for the social critic. In "The Female Swan" the author takes a swipe at the woman who refuses to cultivate a specifically feminine type of consciousness (ducks being women and swans men) — perhaps because she believes that intellectual processes and ways of perceiving are roughly the same for both sexes? There are many for whom this might seem a more reasonable assumption than Suniti Namjoshi's. The whole idea of "Woman-centred" universities (Adrienne Rich's term) and the like, along with the insistence on exclusive female values, seems dangerously close to the anti-feminist theories of those who, at the end of the last century, wished to establish entirely separate colleges for women, adapted to their special needs and abilities. Those reformers (Henry Sidgwick and George Forrest Browne, among others) certainly postulated a conflict between "the nature of ducks and the values of swans".

It seems a bad idea, too, to present Red Riding Hood as a case history written up briefly in pop-psychological jargon: "After the event Little R. traumatized . . . . Extremely uptight." This is one of the several fables that lack a productive undercurrent or a genuine ironic clarity (such as we find in the story that equates the toad's jewel with the girl's virginity). Though she isn't always, Suniti Namjoshi can be extremely deft and perceptive, as in "Svayamvara" (the title is translated as "the choosing of a husband by the bride herself"). The quality of these fables (ninety-five in all) is by no means uniform—some are glib, some arch, some pointless, some entertaining, and some telling.

Disengaging

By Lindsay Duguid

MARY HOBSON:
Oh Lily
187pp. Heinemann. £6.95.
0 434 34020 0

Oh Lily reverses the happily-ever-after plot in which the plain girl's life is transformed by marriage in the final pages. Charlotte, the heroine-victim, marries with indecent haste and is ready by Chapter Six to settle down and reap the harvest of disaster that is in store for her.

Charlotte is an awkward twenty-eight-year-old virgin with a pianist's training, ill-equipped for real life ("She would have unchanged all her moderate talent for the ability to complain when cheated"). On a dismal trip to Italy with her mother Lily, she meets, is seduced by and marries the feckless Paddy, who owns an unsuccessful antique shop in Kensington. Her doubts about marriage are compounded by the fact that she must exchange the security of her mother's house in Blackheath for a basement flat, and the comfort of the idea that she has promise for a life-time of proving that she has not. Any ordinary problems she has in adapting are made worse by the vivacious and dominating Lily, whose benignly corrosive influence makes it impossible for Charlotte to lead her own life.

A series of recapitulations — school contests, Christmases, cosy telly-watching and cake-eating sessions — and almost ritualistic exchanges — "Do you remember?", "Oh, mother you are terrible!"—point up the awfulness of the mother-daughter relationship, which is composed of surrogate comforts and reminders of past failures. Charlotte discovers her absconding father who left when she was eight, but his death shortly afterwards makes her turn to Lily once more. Paddy is increasingly unreliable and money problems and housework take up most of her time. When she becomes pregnant Charlotte descends into a quasi-childhood of dusty rooms, snacks at odd hours and retreats to bed in the afternoon.

The final section of the book describes Lily's death from cancer in agonizingly precise detail. The heavy burden of responsibility is now shifted onto Charlotte. By this time she has learnt to cope with bank managers, Paddy's desertion, her friend Peter's attempted suicide and her own baby Laura, but she is still not ready to do more than attempt to reenact her mother's life of sacrifices and false hopes. The book ends with her addressing the dead Lily: "You did it all for me. I know you did. And I'll do it all for Laura."

Mary Hodson's gift for the blackly humorous is highly individual. Her comic scenes and dialogue (" 'Once a pianist always a pianist' Lily said. 'That's Guildos. You're thinking of Guildea.' Charlotte put her right.") illuminate the bleak landscape she has chosen and she manages to be funny and depressing at the same time. Her characters are both quirky and believable and she shows how habitual role-playing can become the cause of tragedy. The reverse side of family loyalty, chronic deception, culminates in the grotesque pretence to the dying Lily that she will be well again and everything sorted out. The solidity of the inhabitants of the outside world — bank managers, district nurses, Lily's admirer Ted — prevents the novel becoming claustrophobic and the adventures of Paddy in the antique trade add a comic element which stops it declining into a feminist tract.

Lone ranging

By Holly Eley

BARBARA ROGAN:
Changing States
176pp. Weidenfeld and Nicolson. £5.95.
0 297 77869 2

"You need a home. You're a type whose passion is for places, nothing else. You need Israel. You're a child of the Middle East, wherever you were born, and you're fit for no other land . . . it's neither race nor religion to which you belong, it's climate, place and people."

This definition of Zara, the heroine of *Changing States*, by Ronar, the imperturbable gamewarden who is inexplicably moved to follow her round the world in order to marry her, is also the theme of Barbara Rogan's novel. Miss Rogan is good at describing places, in particular Israel. She is less good at describing people and tends to assume that her readership must be unaware of the political realities of contemporary Israel.

Zara, the daughter of ex-Auschwitz pedlaners who have reached a kibbutz via New York, is alienated from her parents, inclined to suspect the Sabra Jews (whose expansionist attitudes remind her of Hitler's *lebensraum* theories) and mainly concerned to define herself and her new environment in intellectual and political terms. A fifteen-year-old neurotic with a penchant for homespun philosophizing, Zara sees herself as a "lone ranger" without destination. She also believes that "the old cosmological bond, Jews against the world, the cowboys-and-Indian Nazi-Jew axis had failed her, lost its bonding power in the country where they were the ruling class. A new conception had to replace it, to fulfil its function." Her liaison with a young Arab is the means to a balanced and liberal political viewpoint.

Ralf, Zara's lover, is accused of being a PLO agent, arrested and imprisoned. The false evidence on which he is convicted has been supplied by her mother and her jealous Jewish classmates. Zara, aided by Ralf's radical feminist lawyer, leaves the kibbutz and embarks on a long journey, during which she attempts (yet again) to define her identity. Miss Rogan's depiction of this odyssey is both colourful and sharp: a sun-drenched itinerary which encompasses an Israeli game reserve, Hydra, Korcula, Rome and Santa Fé, New Mexico just about sustains our interest in Zara's unflagging self-analysis.

Frequent sexual encounters en route are described with the explicit salesmanship of a Grace Metalilous or Rona Jaffe:

> He took the soap and ran it lightly over breasts, touching her nipples with a trailing finger, down her belly and between her legs. She couldn't breathe . . . he touched her clitoris with his thumb and her knees buckled. All she could see through the steam were the piercing green of his eyes and his thrusting penis.

Zara's sessions in Barbara Rogan's first novel. She was born in New York and emigrated to Israel in 1974 where she started a literary agency. Many best-seller components are present in *Changing States* but it is difficult not to feel that Miss Rogan's potential market might gain greater insight into Israel by watching the television news.

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Vladimir Volkoff

Translated from the French by Alan Sheridan

'His book lies in the no-man's-land of literature between Dostoevsky and Graham Greene, trapped somewhere between *The Possessed* and *Our Man in Havana*. *The Turn-around* entertains and informs while nagging the mind and the soul. It should be read and re-read.'
ANDREW SINCLAIR, *The Times*

'Some critics speak of him as a latter-day Dostoevsky. Others call him a new Graham Greene and the French answer to John Le Carré – only better . . . with *The Turn-around* Volkoff has tackled a genre that has long been an Anglo-Saxon monopoly; the serious, well-written spy novel.' *Newsweek*

'This is a brilliant novel, translated from the French into the most impeccably fluent and natural-seeming English prose . . . never stops being a highly entertaining book . . . his urbane and exciting book was a best-seller in France, and it certainly deserves to be one over here.'
A. N. WILSON, *Spectator*

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A MAN

Oriana Fallaci

Translated from the Italian by William Weaver

'Oriana Fallaci's massive and splendid novel . . . I was overwhelmed by the honesty, commitment and breadth of perception of the book.'
THOMAS HINDE, *Sunday Telegraph*

'Oriana Fallaci's massive and splendid novel . . . I was overwhelmed by the honesty, commitment and breadth of perception of the book.'
JOSEPH FARRELL, *Glasgow Herald*

'*A Man* is a moving and compelling story of politics and of love.' DAVID STEPHEN, *New Society*

0 370 30386 7 £6.50

The Radiant Future

Alexander Zinoviev

Translated from the Russian by Gordon Clough

'Zinoviev's great strength, as in *The Yawning Heights*, lies in his ability to capture essential features of Soviet society in well-chosen, closely observed episodes, or in apt satirical images.'
GEOFFREY A. HOSKING, *T.L.S.*

'It gives perhaps the most vivid picture yet to have appeared in the West of life among that fascinating group, the semi-official Moscow intelligentsia.'
CHRISTOPHER BOOKER, *Spectator*

0 370 30219 4 £7.50

BODLEY HEAD

Sold into slavery

By Alan Bell

"Oh please Mr Tiger!"
National Library of Scotland

The Helen Bannerman exhibition which opened recently at the National Library of Scotland, and continues until the end of June, is full of pleasant surprises — not least a rather benign-looking stuffed tiger in the middle of the exhibition room. The author of *The Story of Little Black Sambo*, born in Edinburgh, was the rather retiring wife of a distinguished Indian Medical Service research worker, and her long service in India — much of it spent next door to plague laboratories and experimental rat-pits — led her to send her children regular and charmingly-illustrated news-letters while they were being educated in Scotland. These letters were treasured by their recipients, and the many samples on show reveal the naïve skill which gave *Sambo* such a simple and direct appeal to children when it was first published in 1899.

The copyright was sold outright for five pounds to Grant Richards, who put it out as one of his "Dumpy Books for Children" with immediate success. The author did not share in the profits and lost control of the book, to its later disadvantage. Many others followed — *Quasha*, *Mingo* and lesser-known works like *Pat and the Spider* (written for her son) and *Little Degchie-Head* (a Struwwelpeter tale about a girl who would poke the fire and found herself with a cooking-pot on her shoulders). There was even the posthumous *Little White Squibba* of 1966, an unsatisfactory "realization" of notes found in Mrs Bannerman's papers, which perhaps owes more to a daughter than to Helen herself.

Little White Squibba reveals an element of self-parody in its author, but the whiteness of its title may be intentionally defensive, as criticism of *Little Black Sambo* was apparent even in the author's lifetime. The title itself, originally chosen as a specific name and not as a generic derogative, proved objectionable to those who found in "Sambo" only abuse of Southern niggers and echoes of slavery. It is difficult for those who know only the British editions (now published by Chatto and Windus) to realize the strength of American objections, but the Edinburgh exhibition shows how lack of legal control by the author led to a mass of pirated editions with tasteless illustrations by other hands. The charming, brave, enterprising and always successful spirite of Helen Bannerman's drawings turned, in some of the worst American editions, into a greedy plantation-nigger golliwog. A problem obviously exists, and it is only partly explained by the bibliographical variations apparent to even the youngest visitor. And it is not one that can be whitewashed: almost the worst exhibit of all is a *Little Brave Sambo*, with a noseless, freckled bell-hop as a hero even more unappealing than *Little White Squibba*.

Elizabeth Hay, who devised the exhibition, has written a combined biography and study of the reactions to *Little Black Sambo*, which will be published under the title *Sambo Sahib* by Paul Harris later this month.



Little Black Sambo, not as depicted by Helen Bannerman – who sold the copyright – but in an American edition published by McLoughlin Brothers in the 1930s. The picture comes from the exhibition reviewed here.

Sons and hoovers

By Patricia Craig

Glasshouses
Royal Court Theatre Upstairs

Stephen Lowe's *Glasshouses* opens with an acrimonious little family grouped around an unoccupied bed in a working-class district of Nottingham. The bed is to be dismantled because they are moving house. Arthur, the deaf father (Richard Butler), immersed in the sporting pages of the local paper, refuses to lend a hand. Dora, the ineffectual mother (Margery Mason), flings the bed-clothes to the floor in a gesture compounded of exasperation and rough tolerance. Jim, the literary adolescent son (Nick Dunning), glowers. Suddenly the next-door neighbours, Frank and Elsi (Bernard Kay and June Watson), burst in. They are moving too, though Frank, it seems, is unemployed and not in a stable menial condition. This is perhaps not surprising, since he is subjected to continuous badgering and upbraiding from his rancorous wife. She has it in for him, we may infer, on account of his past sexual misdemeanours, as well as her own current frustrations.

It is the dread of all the children – Jim, his sister Jackie (Sylvestra le Touzel), and Frank and Elsie's son Pete (Martyn Hesford) – that they will grow up to resemble their parents, and who can blame them? Strident domestic noises constantly envelop them: lawn mowers; vacuum cleaners, the sounds of bickering. Something has gone very wrong with the adults' aspirations. The fathers are wartime pals (the play is set in 1963), and the strains (undefined) of post-war life have made one deaf and the other docile. Arthur is the bugbear of his family and Frank has become an object of derision to his.

Jim, who has intellectual resources but a beasty social manner, is in the throes of an infatuation with D.H. Lawrence and his erotic-regenerative theories. With the help of his childhood companion Pete and his girlfriend Cathy (Karen Drury), Jim plans to make a film which will express his own commitment to the life force (as opposed to his parents' miserable stagnation). He tries to recreate pool's well-manicured, well-meaning, innocent Cathy as "A woman who's broken through" – a touching misconception. "He feels very deeply", explains Jackie of Pete, in a wry aside which somehow fails to deflate the outburst it's commenting on. Many of this play's punchlines are not as funny as they're clearly intended to be, and this is partly because the dialogue hovers between social comedy and social commentary, without exactly settling on either.

The production has one moment of genuine humour, when the adults barge in on what appears to be a juvenile orgy but is really the key scene in Jim's unlucky project, about to be filmed by easy-going Pete; and it raises a laugh unintentionally at one point, when the information that Elsie has acquired a dog is followed by a timely offstage bark. Sylvestra le Touzel makes a merrily subversive Jackie, all-pertness and self-possession; Nick Dunning is properly intent as Jim, always taking his clothes off from the highest of motives; and Karen Drury is well cast as pretty, unexceptionable Cathy. But the sogginess at the other side of all the caustic carping keeps breaking through. "I get all maudlin at weddings", apologizes Dora; but admitting it doesn't lessen the embarrassment of its expression. And not even Bernard Kay's polished performance can mitigate the sentimentality of Frank's later utterances, delivered from a corner of the greenhouse where he's supposed to be cultivating tomatoes. What he's actually cultivating is a fatal seizure, brought on by the consumption of alcohol on top of pills.

In the end, after a great many short scenes including an Italian interlude and a trip to the seaside, and a great deal of obtrusive scene-shifting, a tentative reconciliation is affected between the recalcitrant Jim and his churlish father. It takes place over a collection of empty beer bottles. Symbolic, like the glasshouses of the title? Perhaps, but so is the image of the unrealized undertaking – Jim's film – which looms as an unspoken comment on the whole performance.

The next production at the theatre Upstairs, Olly Fraser's new play *I Can Give You A Good Time*, opens on May 6. Carole Hayman and Will Knightley play a Copenhagen prostitute and one of her clients; the director is Max Stafford-Clark.

Thomas Kilroy's version of *The Seagull*, enthusiastically reviewed in Commentary last week, continues in the main theatre at the Royal Court until May 23; a run which may be extended. The text will be published in May by Eyre Methuen (appr. £1.95 paperback, 0 413 49100 8).

The end of the Old Believers

By Derrick Puffett

Khovanshchina
BBC TV and Radio

Khovanshchina occupied Mussorgsky from 1872 until his death nine years later. It belongs to his richest creative period — the period of the revised *Boris*, the *Songs and Dances of Death* and the piano *Pictures* — and might have been a masterpiece. But he approached the composition in so disorganized a fashion — writing words and music simultaneously and working out the plot as he went along — that it never got beyond the sketches. After his death it suffered the fate of almost all Russian operas, being completed and orchestrated by Rimsky-Korsakov. This is the version used by the Bolshoi, whose production was broadcast on April 4. (There is another, better version by Shostakovich, which was recently performed in New York with great success.)

The title means "The Revolt of the Khovansky", and the plot deals with events in Russian history around 1682. Prince Ivan Khovansky wishes to overthrow the Romanovs and instal his son Andrei as tsar. He is supported by the militia and seeks the support of a religious sect, the Old Believers, headed by Dosifei. The Romanovs do not appear in person but are represented by Prince Golitsin, the Empress's lover and an advocate of Western reforms (it was a descendant of his who commissioned the late Beethoven quartets). Other characters are Shaklovity, an intriguer, Marfa, a member of the Old Believers in love with Andrei, and Emma, a Protestant girl whom he pursues. The action is complicated and ends with the mass suicide of the Old Believers in a forest.

It is difficult to make sense of all this. The various elements — political, religious and "human interest" — are juxtaposed in a manner which seems almost haphazard; the human interest is at any rate banal. Dosifei is the only one of the major characters who comes to life. This is because he has the most memorable music — memorable, however, largely because it recalls *Boris Godunov*. Among the minor roles there is a Scribe, one of those whining tenor parts best accomplished by that of the Fool in the earlier work. Otherwise the characterization is rather blank. In a letter of 1876 Mussorgsky claims to have achieved a new type of melody, one evolved from speech: he calls it "the melody of life". One can hear this melody in the songs of the period, and certainly in *Boris*, but I do not hear it in *Khovanshchina*. It is impossible for a non-Russian to say how subtle the word-setting is; but it *sounds* more conventional than that of *Boris*, more like Italian opera or perhaps Tchaikovsky. One misses too the wonderful harmonic imagination that so illuminates the characters of *Boris*.

The production used realistic designs – interiors better than exteriors. The crowd scenes were predictably spectacular, even using (anachronistically) a band onstage for Act 4. Altogether the production was of a rather old-fashioned kind, with many a villainous leer and grimace. The best singing came from Irina Arkhipova and Evgeny Nesterenko, as Marfa and Dosifei respectively; their Act 3 duet was the vocal highlight of the evening. Alexander Vedernikov as Ivan Khovansky was the personification of arrogance, and V. I. Romanovsky made a suave Shaklovity. Chorus and orchestra were both impressive, apart from some acidic string playing. Yuri Simonov conducted.

OYongë Fresshë Folkës, Hee or Shee

They look so beautiful, that's how they look –
but none of them has been into a book.
They look so fresh and innocent (because they've got to)
however hard they try (they do try) not to.
Yet, evil's there, unseen or just subliminal,
a baby face can be that of a criminal.

While we look full of woe and woe untold,
simply because we happen to be old.
Tired eyes, a stoop, a neck as like a vulture's –
these are the hallmarks of our Silver Cultured.
They have the Force, testiculate or clitorate,
we – for our pains – the joy of being literate!

Gavin Ewart

Living both ends

By Stanley Wells

Timon of Athens
BBC TV

The play survives only in a text with serious loose ends and much unpolished dialogue, seemingly laid aside without being brought to completion. Editors have struggled to create a coherence acceptable to readers, invariably, and justifiably, directors brave enough to grapple with it make changes to fit it into shape.

It is problematical to critics as well as to textual scholars; but for all its imperfections it fascinates in its satire – uncharacteristic enough to support the theory that Shakespeare had Middleton as a collaborator – its invective, its pathos, and the imaginative intensity underlying its portrayal of Timon who, as his keenest critic the cynic Apemantus puts it, never knew "the middle of humanity . . . but the extremity of both ends".

Jonathan Miller's direction emphasizes the similar polarity in the play's structure. He intensifies the first of the two parts into which it is divided – up to Timon's self-banishment – partly by textual manipulation, partly by skilful use of Tony Abbot's flexible set, which concentrates the action on Timon's palace, a grand establishment of massive, sunlit stone walls and columns. Costumes are Jacobean; Athens is not visually evoked, nor is the corruption of its society suggested except through individual characterization.

In the opening conversation of Poet and Painter at a lavish reception, John Fortune's impersonation of the anonymous Poet, irreverently – and irrelevantly – funny to those who recognize its devastatingly accurate mimicry of Sir Huw Wheldon, may seem irritatingly precious to those who do not. But the burden of the play falls primarily on the performances of Timon and Apemantus. In the opening episodes, Jonathan Pryce makes Timon young, courteous, self-effacing, touchingly naïve in the pleasure that he takes in pleasing. His realistic banquet – masses of real food – reinforces the recurrent imagery of food and eating with which the dramatist explores true and false values. Timon responds generously to the masque, an admirable piece of period reconstruction, and joins amiably in the dance which the director continues as background to the rest of the scene.

As Apemantus – Timon's antithesis before his disillusionment – Norman Rodway displays a disconcerting geniality. He is one with the lords, not visually distinguished from them, no outsider "dropping after all ... discontentedly, like himself", as the original direction has it. Nor is he given "a table to himself", as Timon instructs. The other guests accept him as a predictable eccentric; his satirical grace before meat does not shock, but is greeted as an expected, familiar comic turn. The performance, beautifully poised and spoken, lacks asperity. All the same, the first part of the play emerges as an excellent piece of serious comedy: Timon's flatterers are funny without being grotesque, and the mock-banquet at which he exposes them is a well-timed study in embarrassment.

But as the play moves closer to tragedy, the performance becomes less satisfactory. Presumably limitations of setting dictated that Timon's farewell should be curtailed and spoken within his own house. It makes a climax, but the emotion is generalized because uncontrolled. The grim set for the second part resembles a desert rather than a beach. Again, Shakespeare's uninterrupted focus on Timon in the play's closing stretches makes cruel demands on the actor. Jonathan Miller has not lessened them. There is little rearrangement; even the false cue for the Poet and Painter is retained. Jonathan Pryce is emaciated and stricken with sores. His visible suffering contrasts sharply with Norman Rodway's continuing suavity, but their quarrel lacks the proper divine fury. He is most effective when relatively calm, as in the episode with the bandits; but his anger and despair need stronger control over the eloquent language; fewer gasps, sniffs and sharp intakes of breath. The episode with Flavius (John Welsh), in which Timon finds that there is "one honest man", is over-expressive, unmoving because lacking simplicity.

Odd direction does not help. For Timon to burrow into the shingle beneath a block of marble which becomes his tomb, and to address all his speeches to the Senators thence, is interesting enough as a symbol of withdrawal – anorexia is perhaps as good an explanation as any for his death – but to show nothing but his head upside-down throughout his later speeches seems wilful and constricting. More important (though understandable in the circumstances), the actor does not find the strange music which suggests in Timon an awareness of a world elsewhere, a dying vision beyond the ordinary. We cannot see why this Timon should say "nothing brings me all things", should be lamented as "noble Timon" in the elegiac closing scene (dignified by John Shrapnel, a sympathetic and strongly-spoken Alcibiades). So the final image, of a heart-broken Flavius musing over Timon's epitaph, seems a sentimental ending to a gallant and largely successful production.

Timon of Athens is due for publication in the autumn in the BBC Shakespeare series, along with the *Dream*, *Troilus* and *Othello*.

Running the straight race

By Richard Brown

Chariots of Fire
Odeon Cinema, Haymarket

Chariots of Fire tells the stirring tale of two Gold Medallists from the 1924 Paris Olympics, apparently to demonstrate (in the words of the blurb) that "the fuel that fires the will to win is not the same for any two men". There is Harold Abrahams, one of a wealthy, cultured set of undergraduates at Caius College Cambridge, determined to achieve that extra success which will prove him to himself in the face of anti-semitic prejudice. He is driven on by the kind of neurotic notions of Englishness that he feels in *H.M.S. Pinafore*, in which he eschews the cup in spite of all temptations / To belong to other nations / He remains an Englishman.

The Flying Scotsman" Eric Liddell, on the other hand, works up a head of steam through his involvement in Christian evangelism. So strong is his faith that he passes up the chance of the Gold Medal in the 100 metres because the heats are run on a Sunday, and, to switch events at the last minute and win the 440. He runs as a prelude to becoming a missionary in China. Whereas Abrahams concentrates on training, Liddell is inspired with a power not his own.

The film rolls along surely on a robust screenplay by Colin Welland. Its combination of sport biography, sociology and 1920s period drama is far more compelling than the weekly diet of shattered world records we now get from television. It has some strong theme music, costume and setting are conventionally sumptuous, the acting is excellent and the stars seem to have put in their share of road and track miles to prepare for filming. There is plenty of running – at normal speed, in slow-motion, and in shorts and spikes as well as impromptu in braces. Here are the humans, we are encouraged to feel, as well as the human achievements. *Chariots of Fire* comes at the right time to enjoy, perhaps greatly to increase, an audience for optimism and all-round moral health created in part by Peter Yates's excellent cycling film *Breaking Away*.

The most obvious clue to its likely success is the way the film manages to avoid giving offence. Despite its clear appeal to traditionally right wing-ish virtues of individual heroism, physical prowess and nationalist pride, to say nothing of militaristic dedication, it takes in a much broader spectrum. Both runners are made out to be anti-establishment figures: Abrahams despising the Cambridge college authorities and Liddell standing up to the bullying of the Prince of Wales.

Few will fail to be affected by the emotional impact of all this virtue. The only worry is that the nicely-balanced celebration of effort in the film will be misunderstood as mystification of winners on even as hagiography – to which Eric Liddell's story is especially susceptible. A book by Sally Magnusson called *The Flying Scotsman* has appeared (191 pp. Quartet Books, £2.50; 0 7043 3379 1), which dwells as much on his faith as his running. She recounts his sporting and missionary career, concluding that the "*sancta simplicitas*" of Liddell will continue to "reverberate gently down the years".

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Taken strange

By Stephen Fender

The Crucible
Comedy Theatre and BBC TV

"I had known of the Salem witch hunt for many years before 'McCarthyism' had arrived", writes Arthur Miller in the introduction to his *Collected Plays*, "and it had always remained an inexplicable darkness to me." And so it might. Were the girls bewitched, or caught up in a form of mass hysteria, or just pretending? Did old women really mutter spells, or were they just lonely? What forces of state authority, community pressure or individual motive fuelled the witch trials. And what was Salem like to live in? A border town? A provincial village? Does anyone really know?

As if to assuage his doubts about what moved these people, Miller threw in every motive he could think of. The girls want to protect themselves from punishment for having danced in the woods. The Reverend Parris fears he may lose his ministry. Goody Putnam has lost seven babies and envies Goody Nurse her ample progeny. Goodman Putnam is land-hungry. The Reverend Hale, the expert witch-finder, has his profession to guard; witches authenticate him. Giles Corey is a litigious old man. John Proctor has seduced, or been seduced by, Abigail Williams. Abigail wants John for her husband, so has designs on his wife, Elizabeth. And so forth.

Much of this is made believable by the economy of dialogue in Miller's opening scenes. Even the adultery (the real Abigail was eleven years old at the time) works well enough in the way it complicates Proctor's struggle for the truth, whereas Willy Loman's adultery in *Death of a Salesman* is one reason too many for his sons' loss of faith in him. And Miller does not blink the fact, as a lesser interpreter might have done, that the girls really were possessed of something outside their consciousness. Yet deeper mysteries remain. One small detail has always puzzled me. The historical Giles Corey testified against his wife *in court*, not (as in the play) in an offhand remark later recanted. The court record reads:

> The evidence of Giles Choree testifieth and saith that . . . sometimes last weeke I fitcht an ox well out of the woods about noone and he laying down in the yard. I went to raise him to yoake him, but he could not rise but dragd his HINDER PARTS as if he had been hipt shot. butt after did rise. I had a cat sometimes last weeke strangly taken on the suddain, and did make me think she would have died presently my wife bid me knock her in the head but I did not and since SHE IS WELL.

Among American Puritans, who believed works irrelevant to salvation or damnation, evidence of human behaviour became almost wholly detached from moral reality. Any disturbance, from premeditated murder to a hip-shot ox, could be a sign of absolute depravity. Even someone who had lived an exemplary life might, unknowingly, be among the damned. When Proc or pleads for Rebecca Nurse — "But it's hard to think so pious a woman be secretly a Devil's bitch after seventy year of such good prayer" — the Reverend Hale answers "Aye, but the Devil is a wily one, you cannot deny it."

It is the Puritans' reckless way with "evidence" that Miller catches so well in *The Crucible*. As the Reverend Parris says, "We are here, Your Honour, precisely to discover what no one has seen." I was pleased to hear the schoolchildren in the audience at the Comedy Theatre laugh heartily at this line. Bill Bryden's production, which has moved to the West End from the Cottesloe, is excellent: as spare in design (just one huge wooden baffle that tilts from attic roof in Parris's house, to horizontal rafters in Proctor's, to vertical backdrop in the court scene) as the play is in its language. The language itself is something of a marvel: not exactly as the Puritans spoke but somehow suggesting it, rather like Pound's brilliant pastiche of "The Seafarer". It is really modern English stripped of some of its verbal auxiliaries and most of its latinisms, and given a kind of "country" grammar (as in "he were" for "he was") which the Cottesloe players match through their deployment of various British regional accents. As for individual performances, Dave Hill's Parris — all slouch and snarl — is interesting but does not have the fussy pettiness for which the character seems to call. Lynn Farleigh is excellent in the difficult role of Elizabeth Proctor, catching just the right balance between censoriousness and warmth. And there could scarcely be a better John Hale than Gawn Grainger's: a carefully studied but entirely fluent transition from certainty to despair, beautifully caught in posture and mannerism.

This first ever television production of *The Crucible*, directed by Don Taylor, is extremely respectful. Not a word is cut, and the actors try their best to obey Miller's often intrusive stage directions ("*Proctor turns an icy stare at him, and he breaks off. Parris raises his palms towards Proctor*"). They even include — dutifully rather than helpfully, it seems to me — an extra scene between Proctor and Abigail in the woods, which Miller added at the end of the first New York run, and which Olivier rightly dropped from his production at the Old Vic in 1965 because it dissipated tension built up by Elizabeth Proctor's arrest.

Apart from the occasional cut to a facial close-up to register a hearer's reaction to a speech, very few television liberties are taken. On the other hand, everyone concerned seizes the inevitable advantages over the stage. The girls can conspire in whispers and still be heard; the lighting can mime illumination by fire and candle; emotions can be seen to flit across faces. The face of Eric Porter, as Deputy Governor Danforth, seems to grow more creased with anxiety by the minute. He only wants the facts. Even Parris (Dennis Quilley) expresses micro-seconds of sensitivity — a mistake, perhaps, since it invites the audience to be rather more inward with the character than it might wish.

On the stage, where facial expressions are less important than words and gestures, their individual dilemmas are less of a distraction. Surely this is as it should be. Though the BBC television version is nearly faultless, the conventional stage is still the best place for the play, because *The Crucible* is a drama more of words than of individual sensibilities. That is why Proctor is willing to sacrifice his person and his honour, but not his name. "The Devil is precise," says Hale in the full flood of his confidence. "Precise" and "precision" are ironic key words in *The Crucible*: the language of this community, for all its apparent sobriety, has grown estranged from the moral realities it purports to represent.

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Edited by Dale Kramer

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Caviare at the Funeral

Louis Simpson

This is the latest collection of poems by the American poet Louis Simpson, whose accomplished work won him the Pulitzer Prize in 1964. In *Caviare at the Funeral* he develops the art of story telling in poems predominantly about people, portrayed in scenes and episodes that range from the 1940s and the Second World War to contemporary America and the Australian Outback. Paper covers £4.50

Oxford University Press

to the editor

English Revolutions

Sir, – I am not so alert as Lawrence Stone (Letters, April 10) to defend my own positions, especially in a field in which I am glad to say, research is proceeding apace. Nor do I think it seemly in a reviewer to challenge criticisms of his own work when these only constitute a minute proportion (one paragraph) of the book in question. Now that he has gratuitously drawn your readers' attention to these criticisms, however, I will just say that while my own thesis, in 1977, that in the early eighteenth century Filmer was still a much more influential political theorist than Locke, may have been a trifle exaggerated, Stone's retreat on old-fashioned Whig Lockeophilia is even more at odds with the findings of current scholarship, though I must await with what equanimity I can muster the shocks which according to him are in store for me in the *Historical Journal*.

Similarly, much of what he has to say about the Dissenters in the 1690s is conventional wisdom subjected to slight exaggeration. I certainly did not mean to imply that the Dissenters were of no political importance (though Whig leaders from 1710 onwards obviously thought so), but I find it difficult to accept, for instance, that after the Restoration "control of the major cities passed to the excluded Dissenting interests", and by implication remained with them.

As for Stone's essay on "The Growth of London", I can now see that my remarks may have given the impression that it is composed out of standard secondary authorities. This is not so. True, only 5 out of his 82 footnotes refer to unprinted material, and it appears that only one of them makes an important point, but otherwise he has ransacked monographs, articles and printed evidence and composed from them, with his accustomed skill, a coherent and interesting story. May I be forgiven for suggesting that the results are not commensurate with the labour involved, or the space devoted to it in this festschrift?

On the other hand I must admit that my remark that half his essay on "The Results of the English Revolution" was devoted to the period before 1642 is a quite unintentional misrepresentation, for which I apologize. (I make it 15 pages out of 78, not 5 out of 100, but the point is taken.)

J.P. KENYON.

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'Post-Modern Classicism'

Sir, – For a writer it is useful to keep in mind the notion of the average reader and, after reading Nicholas Penny's review of my *Post-Modern Classicism* (April 3), I can also see the point of understanding the average misreader. A good misreader systematically misunderstands a piece of writing strictly according to average stereotypes without the interference of his own thoughts. Thus Penny's virtues. Most viewers trained in the canons of traditional architectural classicism (Vitruvius *et al*) will misunderstand Post-Modern Classicism as I pointed out because it doesn't seek the "ideal proportions" (which Penny also seeks). Semantic concerns, and the proportional systems, which are used, are discontinuous. This Free-Style proportion, which may vary across a structure, should be contrasted with the integrated systems of Alberti, Palladio and the Neo-Classicists, although there are some architects today, such as Leon Krier, who adopt them.

In addition to missing ideal proportions, Penny finds "monumentality", "solemnity and grandeur" also lacking. Yes, and he would also miss a great deal of other classical trappings – medallions, astragals and so forth. QED the new style is not classical. This stock response, shared by Straight Revivalists, is predictable and probably even beneficent since it clarifies the average differences between the canonic and free style classicism. Egyptian architecture, as well as Romanesque, Gothic, Mannerist, some Baroque, Rococo and nineteenth-century classicism, belongs to the latter type, along with Post-Modern Classicism. By contrast Greek architecture, some Roman, Renaissance and Neo-Classical building characterizes the canonic variety. Revivals, especially academic ones, have tended to favour a more strict adherence to canons. But both general types should be known to fully understand either one; systematic misunderstanders read one type as the other and find it, not surprisingly, at fault.

While Penny is right to speak of a "competitive idiosyncrasy" in some of the recent work he is wrong to overlook the "common purpose" which unites so many of these architects: the search for a richer language of architecture; the role of architecture as a public art to communicate clearly with the public: the search for continuity, tradition, roots, even the authority of precedent. These shared goals were reiterated by the architects as well as by myself.

CHARLES JENCKS.

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'Retreat from Power'

Sir, – Keith Wilson's assertion (Letters, April 10) that Sir Eyre Crowe and Sir Arthur Nicolson were Russophobes and not Russophils shows a complete ignorance of the facts. (To bracket them together is in any case absurd for their views were quite different.) Neither of them was a Russophobe. But Nicolson, as there is ample evidence to show in his own papers as well as unpublished Foreign Office archives, was undoubtedly a most ardent Russophil. Crowe, on the other hand, was neither a Russophobe nor a Russophil. Like Nicolson he believed in the reality of the German menace and the necessity therefore of upholding the Anglo-Russian Entente in order to maintain the balance of power in Europe. But, unlike Nicolson, he did not think that it was necessary, for this reason, to truckle to every Russian demand in Persia, where her expansionist activities were threatening some of our most vital interests. Nor did he share Nicolson's mistaken belief that there was an imminent danger otherwise of a Russo-German *rapprochement*. The only way, in his view, to prevent Russia from overrunning the whole of Persia and reaching the Gulf, was to leave her a free hand in the North, where we could do nothing to stop her, but at the same time to establish a strong British influence over the Neutral as well as the British sphere in Southern Persia. Nicolson was at first opposed to such a policy both because it would offend Russia and because it meant the partition of Persia. But eventually, like everyone else, including Grey, he was persuaded by Crowe that this was the only possible course. It had been officially decided upon when war broke out in 1914. But it was not finally realized until March 1915 when Russia, in a secret agreement with Britain, agreed to recognize the supremacy of Britain in the neutral as well as the British sphere of Persia, in return for a completely free hand for herself in the North and the promise of Constantinople after the war. Far from being, as Keith Wilson suggests, a move that marked the end of Indian security by establishing a common frontier with Russia in Central Asia, it was one that safeguarded that security by assuring to Britain complete control of the approaches to India by land and by sea. The alternative, had Russia been left unopposed to her own devices, would have been the control by the Russians of both.

SIBYL E. CROWE.

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Sir, – With regard to Keith Wilson's comment (April 10) on Paul Kennedy's review of his *Retreat from Power* (March 20), the question to be raised is not the range of Dr Wilson's evidence but his interpretation of it. It was perfectly possible to strongly support the Anglo-Russian entente (particularly on European grounds) and still oppose the Russian advance into Central Asia and the Turkish Empire (Eyre Crowe in 1914 is not the only Foreign Office example). The point really at issue is whether the Foreign Office and the diplomats, after 1905, were more concerned with the German threat to the balance of power or with the Russian ambitions which continued to pose a serious threat to British imperial interests. The best evidence for Dr Wilson's case for the latter reading comes from the writings of Arthur Nicolson, George Buchanan, and, at times, from Charles Hardinge, all three former or serving ambassadors at St Petersburg. His evidence for Grey's views, in this essay at least, is ambivalent; other and more numerous citations from Eyre Crowe and Louis Mallet (not to speak of William Tyrrell, to whom Dr Wilson does not refer) point in the opposite direction. The difficulty, as Dr Wilson suggests in his letter, is that the problem, which depends less on a specific citation than on a general assessment of the view of each participant, is too complex to be treated in an essay of twenty pages. With Dr Kennedy, I continue to believe that it was the fear of German ambitions and the balance of power in Europe, rather than the position of the British Empire in Central and East Central Asia, which was uppermost in Foreign Office thinking, without denying the continued importance of the latter, particularly after 1912. One will read Dr Wilson's book with interest.

ZARA STEINER.

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Italian Designers

Sir, – While it may be the case that our architects and designers – Le Corbusier, Gropius, for instance – may have used their foreign names, it seems astonishing to find Sir James Richards, in his review of Riccardo Dalisi's book, *Canarsi Furniture* (April 3), writing dismissively about Ettore Sottsass, Alessandro Mendini, Bruno Munari and Gaetano Pesci (sic: in fact, "Pesce").

It may be of interest to Sir James, a former *Architectural Review* editor, and your readers, to learn that Signor Mendini is the editor of *Domus* – which has replaced the *Architectural Review* as the leading international magazine concerned with architecture and design – as well as being a designer of outstanding distinction. Signor Sottsass and the others are today's leading Italian designers.

To say nothing of the tasteless xenophobia of his remarks – "can there really be a group of 'famous' contemporary Italian designers called . . .?", he writes – it is sad to see Sir James, who once worked so tirelessly himself in bringing advanced ideas from the Continent to Britain, acting, perhaps unwittingly, as an agent of the philistinism and snobbishness about design which has so bedevilled English culture (and which, it might be added, is a recurrent feature of your own journal).

STEPHEN BAYLEY
PENNY SPARKE

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Eric Partridge

Sir, – In Roy Harris's review on the subject of Eric Partridge (March 20), there was a reference to his venture into publishing in the early 1930s and to its subsequent bankruptcy. This refers to the Crypt House Press, Gloucester. Eric Partridge's partner in this enterprise was my father, Francis Cobb, then recently retired from the Sudan. Indeed I think my father provided some at least of the financial backing, and he certainly lost whatever he put into it.

RICHARD COBB.

Worcester College, Oxford.

G. B. Edwards

Sir, – In Eric Korn's perceptive review of G.B. Edwards's *The Book of Ebenezer le Page* (March 27) there is an error in his date of birth. Edwards was born on July 8, 1899, not 1889. It should perhaps also be noted, if only out of courtesy to his former host, that he did not spend his last years in a boarding-house in Weymouth but lodged in the private house (and sympathetic company) of Mr and Mrs Bert Snell on the Dorchester road just outside that town.

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Among this week's contributors

FLEUR ADCOCK's most recent volume of poems, *The Inner Harbour*, was published last year.

GERRY ASHTON teaches Spanish at Westminster School.

PAUL BAILEY's most recent novel is *Old Soldiers*, 1980.

HAROLD BEAVER is Reader in American Literature at the University of Warwick.

CHARLES BOYLE's collection of poems, *Affinities*, was published in 1977.

ANTONY BRETT-JAMES's books include *Wellington at War 1793–1815*, 1961, and *Daily Life in Wellington's Army*, 1972.

ABRAHAM BRUNSCHVIG is the editor of *Russia Under Khrushchev*.

G. P. BUTLER is Professor of Modern Languages at the University of Bath.

JUDITH CHERNAIK's most recent novel, *The Daughter*, was published earlier this year.

IAN R. CHRISTIE is Astor Professor of British History at University College, London.

MARTIN COOPER's books include *Bruckner and the Last Decade*, 1970.

NICHOLAS FAITH's *The Winds around the World* was published in 1978.

PETER KEMP's critical study *H. G. Wells and the Culminating Ape* will be published shortly.

DAVID KIRBY teaches English at Florida State University.

DORIS LANGLEY MOORE's books include *Lord Byron: Accounts Rendered*, 1974 and *The Late Lord Byron*, reprinted in 1979.

JULIUS LEWIN's books include *Politics and Law in South Africa*, 1963.

DAVID LIEBERMAN is a Fellow of St Catherine's College, Cambridge.

PATRICK MCCARTHY is the author of *Céline*, 1975.

WILLIAM MANN is Senior Music Critic of *The Times*. His *The Operas of Mozart* was published in 1976.

JAY PARINI's *Theodore Roethke: An American Romantic* was published in 1979.

ARNOLD PAUCKER is the Editor of the *Year Book of the Leo Baeck Institute*.

TIM PAULIN's most recent collection of poems, *Fivemiletown*, was published last year.

DAVID PEARS's books include *Questions in the Philosophy of Mind*, 1975.

CHRISTOPHER PILLING's collection of poems, *Arcadia*, was published in 1979.

NESTA ROBERTS is the author of *The Face of France*, 1976.

J.M. ROBERTS's books include *History of the World*, 1976, and *The French Revolution*, 1978.

CAROL RUMENS's most recent collection of poems, *Unplayed Music*, was published earlier this year.

SANDRA SALMANS is a regular contributor to the *New York Times* and the *International Herald Tribune*.

JOHN SIMON's study of language, *Paradise Lost*, will be published by Chatto and Windus later this year.

C.H. SISSON's translation of the *Divine Comedy* was published earlier this year.

HERBERT R. SOUTHWORTH is the author of *La destruction de Guernica: Journaliste, diplomatie, propagande et histoire*, 1977.

DENIS STEVENS is President of the Accademia Monteverdiana. His books include *The Letters of Monteverdi*, 1980.

NORMAN STONE's biography of Hitler was published last year.

RICHARD TUCK is the author of *Natural Rights Theories: their Origin and Development*, 1980.

MALCOLM VALE is a Fellow of St John's College, Oxford.

STANLEY WELLS is General Editor of the Oxford Shakespeare.

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JOHN MURRAY

When I disagrees with Me

By David Pears

M.R. HAIGHT
A Study of Self-Deception
163pp. Brighton: Harvester. £16.95.
0 85527 918 4

Self-deception is a difficult concept. If we take the name literally, it seems to make its own application impossible because it requires a person to adopt two incompatible states. As the object of the deception he must accept the very belief that he has rejected in the role of subject. So perhaps it is better to take the kind of case that we would all diagnose as self-deception in real life or in literature and inquire how closely such cases approximate to the name's literal, but impossible suggestion.

M. R. Haight, like most philosophers, starts with the first approach. She demonstrates at some length that, if the demands made by the concept are meant literally, it pricks itself out of the market. There are two ways in which this conclusion might seem to be avoidable, but neither of them is successful.

First, we might try to relax the impossible asymmetry between the beliefs of the self-deceiver and the self-deceived. Perhaps the self-deceiver need not actually reject the belief that he is promoting. It might be enough that he should merely not accept it, because he has no reason to accept it. But here too there is an impossible asymmetry not only between non-acceptance and acceptance of the shuttlecock belief but also between the same two attitudes to the implication that there is reason to accept it.

The second way of trying to avoid the conclusion, that there is no such thing as literal self-deception, would be to suggest that neither the self-deceiver nor the self-deceived is the whole person. But if there is some kind of rift across which the shuttlecock is batted, self-deception will not be a game like ordinary deception requiring two whole players.

So much is familiar, but the dismissal of the second way of avoiding the negative conclusion introduces a question of interest to psychologists as well as philosophers: What sort of rift does occur in real cases of so-called "self-deception"? The inquiry now becomes empirical. We assume, with Tom Stoppard, that St Sebastian did not die of fright and we ask how arrows actually succeed in hitting their targets.

One model for the rift would be the dissociation of two personalities within a single person. Haight examines a variety of case histories of this kind in the hope that they will help us to understand the rift that occurs in ordinary cases of self-deception (the best cases that we can manage). Perhaps the most helpful is the case history of "Eve". Eve Black was aware of Eve White's thoughts, but not *vice versa*, and Eve Black could supply Eve White with thoughts which arrived in the form of hallucinatory voices, and even more surprisingly, she was able to withdraw or erase Eve White's thoughts. So here we have the possibility of the deception of one multiple personality by another and there are clear points of analogy with self-deception. The deceiving and the deceived personalities both belong to the same person and the deceiving personality has inside knowledge of the thought-processes of the deceived personality, and so can devise a complex strategy involving several moves towards her final goal.

A different model is provided by hypnosis. A hypnotized subject can be given elaborate instructions, which he carries out after the end of the trance rationalizing as he goes. Here too there is an analogy with ordinary self-deception. If we are asked who it is who carries out the instructions, a plausible answer is that it is the hypnotic agent within using the subject's eyes to pick up the cues for his performance and possibly even exploiting direct access to the subject's thoughts.

The difference between these two models is that we unhesitatingly attribute consciousness to the dissociated personality but are less inclined to attribute it to the hypnotic agent. Part of the reason for this disinclination is obvious: Eve Black can take command of Eve's voice and the agent remains in Eve's brain and so she passes the ordinary test for consciousness, communication, but the hypnotic agent appears to remain dumb and so fails the test.

However, this in itself is not enough to justify our discrimination. We also need a reason for accepting the appearance at face value, that is, that the hypnotic agent himself who tells us what he is going to do next when he is carrying out the instructions. In order to eliminate this hypothesis we need a theory about the identification of the speaker behind the voice.

Haight simply says that the hypnotic agent fails the communication test. She then supplies a theoretical consideration, but it is a qualification pointing in the opposite direction. She suggests that, when a splinter fails the communication test, we are less disinclined to attribute consciousness to it if it is complex.

This is a suggestion worth exploring. If the hypnotist had issued enough instructions to cover the next day in the subject's life, we might possibly be inclined to say that the hypnotic agent was conscious. However, in that case our reasoning would be faulty. We would be arguing that the limit of what can be achieved without consciousness had been exceeded; but a computer can play chess and Haight, for one, would not attribute consciousness to it.

It seems that the complexity that she means is not the complexity of a strategy but the complexity of an integrated personality. But even that kind of complexity would not justify an attribution of consciousness to a splinter which failed the communication test. For even if the hypnotist implanted a very complex set of desires and beliefs, we still would not attribute consciousness to the hypnotic agent unless we were arguing in the faulty way already dismissed. The trouble is that, when we heard the voice expressing the desires and beliefs, we would regard the waking subject as at least the joint issuer of the communications. Before attributing consciousness to the hypnotic agent, we would insist on communications that could not be jointly issued by the waking subject. But that means that we would require the hypnotic agent to pass the communication test under his own flag.

If this is the pattern of our discrimination, it is an understandable one. We know that the hypnotic agent is under orders and so any communications that do not present this inside picture of his predicament do not have to be attributed to him. If some communications did have to be attributed to him, others, which need not be, might be, but if none have to be, none will be, even if the states that they express are integrated in a complex way. That seems to be the theory underlying the identification of the speaker behind the voice and we do not have to attribute consciousness to a splinter that has not been identified as a speaker. We could develop the theory even further by insisting that there is no need to attribute consciousness to the splinter unless it manifests consciousness of itself as an integrated system distinct from the rest of the subject. That certainly seems to be the right point to consider integration.

The theory may seem to tie consciousness too tightly to sole command of the voice, even if only to intermittent command. However, it merely supplies a rule for positive identification of the speaker and definite attribution of consciousness to him. If the splinter fails the communication test, that may be because it is in sole command of the voice but maintains an obstinate silence, or it may be because there are communications but it is only their joint-issuer. In both these cases it may still be conscious but we do not have to suppose that it is.

But could it be conscious without any command of the voice, and so without even the possibility of speaking? If so, it is not easy to see how such an attribution of consciousness could be understood. Freud's general reason for not making it was that in such cases the splinter would not be accessible to the consciousness of the rest of the subject. Haight observes that this leaves it open that the splinter might still be conscious of itself. But Freud had a special reason for rejecting that possibility too. As Thomas Nagel has pointed out, Freud believed that there are so many internal inconsistencies in the Unconscious that we would have to postulate a large number of different subjects in order to give them the kind of integration that is needed for consciousness of oneself as a distinct system.

It is an important feature of the actual phenomenon of self-deception that it usually involves a small, well integrated splinter. A wish promotes a belief without any basis or even in opposition to a rival belief that does have some basis. If the wish itself is not repressed in the Preconscious, at least its operation must be. That will be the splinter, which may then simply produce the belief or may do so by exploiting the subject's situation and conscious states in the cunning way that is typical of extended self-deception.

Evidently Freud could not invoke his special reason for denying that such a splinter could be conscious of itself. It would be too well integrated. However, his general reason remains powerful. There is no external consciousness of the splinter and all its achievements can be explained functionally without postulating an internal self-consciousness. Some will protest that this is not decisive and that they can still picture the self-consciousness of the splinter completely cut off from any access to the speech-centre – something like being buried alive. But we can dismiss this picture, with Freud, without extending functionalism to cover the whole of our conscious mental lives and so without ignoring the rich phenomenal show that we actually enjoy.

Self-deception is a sin against reason and the difficulty of understanding how a rational animal can commit it is far more important than the impossibility of satisfying the literal requirements of the concept. So when Haight has endorsed that impossibility and put it aside, and criticized Sartre for not putting it aside, we might expect a longer treatment of the paradoxes of irrationality and some kind of theory about them. What we get is an interesting datum, an account of a self-deceptive episode in her own life, but very little theory.

This is because the paradox of literal self-deception dominates the first part of the book, pushing the more important paradoxes of irrationality into the background. Of course, these paradoxes do not have to be introduced as if they were intellectually paralysing. We may be quite ready to admit that people do act against their own better judgment and do form beliefs against their own assessment of the tendency of the evidence. But we still want to know how these things happen. The problem that starts an inquiry does not have to threaten paralysis.

If we include the paradoxes of irrationality in our survey, we can discern an overall pattern. The easiest achievement of unreason is the promotion of a belief that is neither favoured nor disfavoured by the subject's evidence. Next in order of difficulty comes the promotion of a belief whose negation is a natural consequence of his evidence; then comes the case in which the negation is a logical consequence of his evidence, and finally what is accepted may simply be the negation itself. That would be literal self-deception and it is best to examine it on its own merits without the pressure of the suggestion of its name.

Another dimension of variation is the motive. In Haight's own case the self-deception was directed to avoiding a certain course of action. She infers with the help of some other examples that the goal is always some action or inaction. This cannot be right. Of course, action often is the goal of self-deception, as it is when a man buys a smart but cramped car because his decision to own a smart car swings his judgment the other way when he is making the purchase. But action is certainly not the only goal of self-deception and in this very example it is natural to suppose that some of the bluster occurs after he has bought the car, so that it can not all have been directed to promoting the purchase.

This is not speculation. Cognitive psychologists have produced ample evidence that blasting of the kind that might produce an intentional action is sometimes produced by it and their experiments include situations in which no action is involved. The cases in which an action produces the blasting are particularly interesting. It need not be because the action would have been undeniably irrational if there had been no blasting. It can merely be because the decision, though rational, was an uncomfortably close-run event and so the agent retrospectively magnifies the gap between the two contesting considerations. Here the goal is comfort. Where the charge of irrationality is avoided, the goal includes self-esteem. The general heading under which all such goals can be listed is, of course, "Pleasure". We need not agree with Freud's account of the origin of the "primary process", which seeks satisfaction in the idea without the reality of achievement, but we can hardly deny that it is often at work in our lives.

It did not need cognitive psychology to uncover these facts. They were already familiar to any shrewd observer of human nature and only in need of experiment and theory to systematize them. However, if philosophers were allowed to add only one field of psychological investigation to their own arid paradoxes, this one is at least as fertile as multiple personality. But fortunately they are not restricted to a single choice.

Grounds for self-preservation

By David Lieberman

JAMES TULLEY:
A Discourse on Property
John Locke and his adversaries
194pp. Cambridge University Press. £10.50.
0 521 22830 1

"This is Mr. Locke's solution", William Paley explained in 1785. "Each man's limbs and labour are his own exclusively", so that when a man occupies "a piece of ground" and thereby "inseparably mixes his labour with it", the piece of ground "becomes thenceforward his own", "something which is indisputably *his*". According to Paley, "Mr. Locke's solution" explained how an individual could justly acquire private property in land, a problem of some difficulty given the unchallengeable premise that "by the law of nature" land was "no doubt" originally the common property of all mankind.

In fact, this was neither Mr. Locke's solution nor indeed the whole of his problem; and Paley in these remarks did little more than contribute to a tradition that was already well established within a hundred years of the first publication of the *Two Treatises of Government* and has since remained peculiarly vigorous in Western political theory: misinterpreting Locke's account of property. "Mr. Locke's solution" has now been rigorously re-examined by James Tully in an impressive and challenging addition to Locke studies.

Professor Tully's chief ambition "is to recover the meaning which John Locke intended to convey in his theory of property", and naturally the fifth chapter of the *Second Treatise* supplies the central text for discussion. But the task of textual analysis is preceded by two complementary inquiries, designed to illuminate the character and immediate ideological objectives of Locke's theory. He devotes the first part of the work to a terse exposition of the epistemological groundwork of Locke's political doctrines, reconstructing the often abstruse line of reasoning Locke himself failed to furnish to connect the metaphysics of *Human Understanding* with the morals of the *Two Treatises*. The connective tissue is found in what Tully styles Locke's "theory of the maker's knowledge" and his "workmanship model", the formulas through which Locke demonstrated man's capacity for certain knowledge of the moral world and established the basic postulate governing man's moral condition in the world: his paramount and unceasing obligation to his divine Maker.

As Tully shows, it was Locke's epistemological commitments which determined that the critique of Filmer and account of government in the *Two Treatises* had to be conducted on an exercise in natural law theory. But while the laws of nature supplied the proper philosophical apparatus for combating the bluff social realism and parade of Scriptural authority deployed by Filmer in *Patriarcha*, the natural law tradition remained a distinctly uncongenial setting for Locke's polemical purposes. For natural law argument, as it had been shaped by its most distinguished seventeenth-century practitioners, Grotius and Pufendorf, led to much the same absolutist conclusions reached by Filmer. Locke was thus forced to adopt the vocabulary of Grotius and Pufendorf until, and later declined to attribute to the "absolute and unlimited power of the landlord". Moreover, as Tully sets out in the course of an admirably sensitive yet ultimately devastating critique of C. B. Macpherson's famous account of Locke's bourgeois politics, the notion of labour utilized in the *Two Treatises* equally denies legitimacy to any system of property relations which would force an individual to sell his labour to another. And in identifying Locke's position with the most aggressively egalitarian pronouncements of the 1647 Putney debates, Tully concludes that the *Two Treatises* provided nothing less than the "theoretical foundation" for the revolutionary call "to reconstitute society".

It is no doubt this insistence on Locke's social radicalism which seems most vulnerable. Tully's interpretation of Locke accords well with the picture of the Christian scholar illegally evicted from Christ Church Oxford, the political refugee of the 1680s, and the relentless opponent of the comfortable Kentish squire, Sir Robert Filmer. It sits rather less deftly alongside the figure who was brought into the world of Whig patronage and London commerce by the Lords Shaftesbury and Somers, who did not fail to remind the reader of the *Two Treatises* of the manner in which economic progress rendered the plight of the meanest labourer in England more comfortable than the greatest Indian king in America, and who always kept his severest strictures on the vanity and corruption of "Courts" and "Inferior Grandees" in unpublished manuscript. If Professor Tully has succeeded brilliantly in recovering all that was implied in Locke's theory of property, he has perhaps not closed the question of how many of these implications Locke himself "intended to convey" when he finally decided in 1689 to publish anonymously the *Two Treatises*.

As later generations were relieved to find, not all the lessons of Locke's natural rights doctrines appeared to be drawn with equal force and penetration. Some sixty years later when William Blackstone sought the moral claims for England's property law, he promptly invoked the weighty authority of Grotius, Pufendorf and Locke, blithely discounting their points of disagreement, and finding nothing in Locke's own discussion to cause alarm or disquiet. But when he turned to questions of sovereignty and political obligation, the *Two Treatises* could not be embraced with any such ease or confidence. "Mr. Locke", Blackstone bluntly reported, "perhaps carries his theory too far."

Pandering to the public

By Ian R. Christie

MARIE PETERS:
Pitt and Popularity
The Patriot Minister and London Opinion during the Seven Years' War
309pp. Clarendon Press: Oxford University Press. £17.50.
0 19 822498 2

On February 26, 1757, there was a confrontation between King George II and his secretary of state for the southern department, William Pitt. Pitt sought mercy for Admiral Byng, whose condemnation by a court-martial for neglect of duty in failing to beat off a French attack on Minorca entailed the death penalty. The public demanded blood and the king was unrelenting. The House of Commons, said Pitt, was in favour of leniency. The king made the icy, two-edged rejoinder: "Sir, you have taught me to find the sense of my people elsewhere than in the House of Commons."

The king's remark carries us straight to the heart of the matter which Marie Peters has sought to elucidate. What was the nature, the role and the importance of public opinion in eighteenth-century British politics? Clearly—and as if for the first time—George II had been brought to acknowledge its existence. But politicians had long shown awareness of it—not always with deference, for there are indications that the Whig supremacy was riveted on Britain after 1714 in despite of a massive Tory sentiment in the country at large. Thereafter, whether helpfully or adversely, public opinion was a factor affecting the calculations and the conduct of the political class.

Its operation might be irrational and unpredictable, as when a wave of feeling undermined Sir Robert Walpole's position in 1733 and obliged him to withdraw his sensible schemes for extension of the excise. It might be whipped up by naked lies, as when John Wilkes in 1768 pleaded that a promise of a royal pardon had not been honoured. It might express deeply-felt religious prejudice—successfully, as in the case of Jewish naturalization in 1753-4, or unsuccessfully, as witness the clamour culminating in the Gordon Riots against the policy of Catholic relief in 1780. Public disquiet or public anger over defeat in war could contribute to the displacement of ministers, as in 1742 or 1756. In 1783-4 a convulsion of public feeling developed over seemingly vital questions of political morality and the balance of the constitution, contributing in a crucial way to the establishment in power of the younger Pitt. Pitt's father, as Dr Peters shows, stood at the centre of such a situation in the late 1750s, and she explores it to elucidate the manner in which opinion was aroused, the groups with which opinions were associated, the degree of their impact, and the ways in which the politicians who were the targets of public opinion sought to overcome the difficulties it posed and use it for their own purpose.

A general expansion of the printing and publishing industry took place during the eighteenth century. Every war—and prolonged wars were frequent after 1739 – intensified the general interest in public affairs and increased the market for newspapers, periodicals and magazines. Peters's work is not primarily a study of the press, but it makes an appreciable contribution to its history: and her investigations seem to indicate that pamphlets played a more important role than newspapers in the formulation and dissemination of political views. Some contribution was made by weekly political journals, but most of these were ephemeral: only the *Monitor*, the organ supported by Alderman Beckford and the Tories of the City of London, sustained its existence through the years 1755-65.

Peters defines "popularity" in a special sense. It was achieved through identification with a complex of attitudes and policies, some of them atavistic, which appealed to particular Independent and Tory political groups. These attitudes included hostility to standing armies, to high finance, to continental diplomatic or warlike entanglements, to the growth of officialdom, and to the whole tedious and sometimes disreputable gallimaufry of wheeling and dealing which constituted eighteenth-century political management. The aspirations associated with these "country" attitudes embraced Tory constitutional reforms aimed against the apparatus by which Whig domination was believed to be perpetuated – long parliaments and the packing of the Commons with placemen – and sustained demands for a distinctive range of policies, including a Triennial Act, Place and Pension Acts, and a locally-organized militia for home defence.

It was virtually impossible for the professional politicians of George II's reign to identify themselves in any way with such a package; or if they did, it was only to rat when the crunch came, provoking in one instance Samuel Johnson's reflection: "You know it is ridiculous for a Whig to pretend to be honest. He cannot hold it out." Pitt's career in the late 1750s was remarkable for the extent to which he was able to avoid this difficulty. Fortuitously, at the crucial moment in 1756 he was committed in his search for advancement neither to the favour of the crown nor to association with a powerful aristocratic group. George II regarded him with disfavour and the Pelham connection at the head of the Old Corps of Whigs showed no interest in furthering his career. Peters points out that, in addition, his jagged individualism and anti-aristocratic attitude made it especially easy for him to court the third and only other possible base of political support and appeal to the "patriot" platform. This option enabled him to win the backing of political Independents and of the hundred or so surviving members of the Tory Party in the Commons, as well as of the sixty or so followers of the party of the Prince of Wales based on Leicester House, a group which itself was cultivating the "patriot" line. These forces alone could not sustain him against the hostility of George II and the Old Corps but were sufficient to enable him to force the Duke of Newcastle and other leaders of the Old Corps to accept him as a partner in government in June 1757.

Once in office Pitt was driven to inevitable compromises over policy. Nevertheless he managed for sufficiently long to hold on to Tory support (though not that of Leicester House, which was lost by 1759) by virtue of a pose, partly real, partly feigned, of antagonism towards the Tories' *bête noire*, the Duke of Newcastle. Also he conciliated various strands of patriot opinion by ostentatiously championing certain of their crotchets, particularly the militia. In addition, he displayed a deviousness of conduct of which Peters gives a full and entertaining account. Policies which offended against the canon of "patriotism", such as growing involvement in the Seven Years War on the Continent, were at first denied, or concealed, and ultimately paraded as simply serving the purely national purposes of the overseas struggle for empire against the French. Expeditions against the French coasts were used as a smoke-screen to conceal his purposes. When the necessary pursuit of "unpatriotic" policies could no longer be hidden, Pitt blamed them on the Pelhamite political forces ranged against him—a technique he continued even after Newcastle had become a ministerial ally. Growing "country" anxiety about high war taxation was met by denunciations of Newcastle or his underlings for fiscal mismanagement.

Throughout these years Pitt, as well as directing a great war, was engaged in a series of balancing acts of an increasingly hazardous kind, and even the immense popularity, in the more general sense, won by the great victories of 1758-60, could not sustain him for long. The Tory alliance came under increasing strain. City Toryism became bound to him by enthusiasm for the prosperity which war and successful colonial aggression brought to the merchant interests, but country Toryism drifted away, alienated by high taxation and unable to swallow the German war: here, it would seem, is one of the factors contributing to that as yet obscure phenomenon, the break-up of the old Tory Party between 1755 and 1765.

With the accession of George III in 1760 the nature of the political game was changed, and to Pitt's disadvantage. The new king could outbid him on the patriot platform. "Popularity" in the special sense could no longer serve him. Popularity in the general sense started to ebb as men began to question whether any objective remained to justify the continuance of an expensive war. Pitt's powers of command within the cabinet were slipping, and Peters speculates as to whether his decision to resign in October 1761 over his colleague's refusal to agree to an immediate war with Spain was perhaps a gambler's throw to revive his popularity as a patriot, but there is no clear evidence, and she rightly leaves the point unresolved. If this was indeed in Pitt's mind, then the move not only failed but exposed him to damaging attack. Both the Earl of Bute on the one hand and the leaders of the Old Corps on the other believed it worth while to disarm him politically by mounting violent press campaigns for the destruction of his political reputation—campaigns which had a fair measure of success.

One more of the many merits of this study is the way it makes clear how, at this point, the propaganda efforts on behalf of the three contenders, Bute, Newcastle, and Pitt, precipitated the elements of a debate about the foundations of political power, the rumblings of which were to sound at intervals through much of the reign of George III. What was it that legitimized the enjoyment of power in high office? Was it the favour of the crown? Or was it the weight of aristocratic connection? Or was it the approval of "the people" – whatever was meant by that indeterminate phrase? Disappointed politicians were to accuse their rivals of ignoring whichever, to them, was the most important of these three factors. Men in office usually drew elements of power from all of them.

Co-ordinating the Crown

By Richard Tuck

CORINNE COMSTOCK WESTON and JANELLE RENFROW GREENBERG:
Subjects and Sovereigns
The Grand Controversy over Legal Sovereignty in Stuart England
430pp. Cambridge University Press. £20.
0 521 23272 4

GEORGES DUBY:
The Three Orders
Feudal Society Imagined
Translated by Arthur Goldhammer
382pp. University of Chicago Press. £15.
0 226 16771 2

Some twenty-five years ago, in an article in the *Proceedings of the American Philosophical Society*, Corinne Comstock Weston began to investigate the history of the notion that sovereignty in England is divided between the three "estates" of Kings, Lords and Commons. Since then she has published a justly famous article on the seventeenth-century debate over this subject (in the *English Historical Review* for 1960); a book on the constitutional history of the House of Lords 1556-1832 (1965), whose theme is substantially the same; an article on the late seventeenth-century debate (1972); and now, in collaboration with Janelle Renfrow Greenberg, the book under review. (I may have missed some other *Vorarbeiten*.)

Since 1960, Professor Weston's argument has been largely the same: in the early seventeenth century, it was generally assumed in England that the King enjoyed a position of unchallenged superiority within the constitution. His prerogative was partly a set of disparate and law-governed rights, but also a discretionary power which he could use outside or even over the law in case of need. If there were three estates, then they were (as in the medieval European account) the lords, clergy an commons, over all of whom the King was sovereign. In 1642 Charles I, or more properly two of his ministers, replied to a set of nineteen propositions offered to him by Parliament with an *Answer* in which for the first time the Crown was recognized by royalists as one of the three estates, and thereby put on a level with the others.

The Pandora's box thus opened proved to be the death of the old theory, and the modern world was brought into being, in which both Whig and Tory ultimately agreed on what Weston calls a "community-centred" idea of government.

The story of this transition is told here with a wealth of interesting detail, particularly about the attempts by startled royalists in the 1640s to disavow their master's public statement, and about the ideological battles of the 1680s. The authors' knowledge of the pamphlet literature is enviably vast, though their sensitivity to the political history of the period is less sure (for example, they tend to assume that anyone serving on a Commons' committee to prepare a declaration of some kind can be presumed to endorse the final product). But this impressive superstructure makes one wonder even more about the security of the foundations. As Weston observed in 1960 (though the observation is not repeated in this book), it was a commonplace among Elizabethan writers that England was a mixed monarchy in which the King was one of three estates; moreover, one of the writers, Sir Thomas Smith, whom today she quotes as extolling the power of the English Crown she quoted in 1960 as arguing that it was one of the estates. The two remarks attributed to Smith are not of course inconsistent; but herein lies the problem. It did not seem, to Elizabethan Englishmen that there was any discrepancy between terming England a mixed monarchy and according remarkably wide discretionary powers to the Crown; the interesting question is therefore when and why this came to seem so difficult.

Weston and Greenberg do not in fact clearly answer this question. As to when, they are evasive over whether the notion of the King as one of three estates much worried anyone before 1642; as to why, they are guilty of some inconsistency. They claim that the tenet of co-ordinated sovereignty introduced in 1642 marked the end of old assumptions about the divinely-ordered character of government and their replacement by the new community centred ideology. But if the assumption of co-ordination was so widespread in the sixteenth and (probably) in the early seventeenth centuries, how can its equally widespread use after 1642 mark the end of old assumptions? The critical question is (so to speak) the mirror-image of the one they have addressed: when and why did the idea that the King is *above* the three estates enter English political theory? The authors provide some information on this topic, on the basis of which one could hazard a guess that it was not until the 1630s, at least to any great extent, and that it was connected largely with worries about the position of the *clergy* under the constitution, and not of the King. After all, if the King is one of the estates, then his presence excludes the clergy from the magic triad, and therefore in some sense from the community. In turn, one would also guess that their exclusion from the estates was a Reformation phenomenon, because in one sense what the Reformation did was to call into question the position of the priesthood within the nation.

In this context, it is ironic that an English translation of the distinguished French historian Georges Duby's *The Three Orders* should have just appeared. In this work, originally published in France in 1978, Duby traces the origins of the medieval European theory of the orders or estates, and shows the complexity of its history and the different interests involved in the creation and use of the formula. In his view, it was indeed the clergy who were (at first) vitally interested in having the formula generally accepted, though later kings perceived its usefulness to themselves. If this is correct, then it is equally plausible that in the 1630s a Laudian clergy should have found it enticing, to be followed in this respect by their lay sympathizers in the 1640s. Clarendon, in his comment on the 1642 *Answer*, actually says as much.

But if this is the correct way to read the 1642 debate, it subverts the idea that we are witnessing the collapse of old assumptions. The Laudians appear as *innovators*—aggressively atavistic, in a way familiar from other areas of Caroline life. But in that case, the co-ordination theorists were re-stating a traditional notion of the constitution against innovators; and the Parliamentarians' view that co-ordination was the ancient English constitutional way, while not historically wholly plausible, made sense in the perspective of post-Reformation English history. The modern world, in this area as in so many others, is older than one would guess from its youthful appearance.

Iberian eye-view

By Antony Brett-James

W.F.K. THOMPSON (Editor):
An Ensign in the Peninsular War
The letters of John Aitchison
317pp, Michael Joseph. £15.95.
0 7181 1826 6

Hardly a year passes without the publication of a new diary or collection of letters written during Wellington's campaigns. One wonders whether British officers wrote more frequently and more detailed letters, or whether their families have preserved them with greater care than in other countries of Europe. W. F. K. Thompson, whose death last year was a loss to military history and to journalism, has edited the letters written almost weekly from Spain and Portugal by John Aitchison, who served as a junior officer in the 3rd Regiment of Guards.

Readers may feel that Aitchison devoted too much space to telling his father in East Lothian about the tactics and strategy of the war, and to speculating, often misguidedly, about the army's future prospects. He is much more interesting when comparing agricultural methods in the Peninsula with those in Scotland; and his observations on the peasantry and the local armies have value. He does not hesitate to criticize Wellington, in particular for undertaking and persevering with the siege of Burgos, of which Aitchison gives a detailed account. He provides several examples of General Graham harassing his troops by an excess of zeal or of caution. And he waxes indignant about the failure of the authorities to provide enough wagons or carts for the transport of the sick and wounded during the retreat from Burgos. It is a pity that he scarcely mentions either his fellow officers or the soldiers under his command.

Although Aitchison, who in later life rose to the rank of general, was present at such battles as Talavera, Busaco and Salamanca, he appears to have disliked campaigning, for he did his utmost to dissuade his brother George from joining the Army: "the worst profession that any young man can follow". Brigadier Thompson has edited the letters, and certain extracts from Aitchison's diary, with great care and a firm grasp of the war as a whole. Occasionally he gives too detailed a background narrative, notably about events in which Aitchison took no part—he was at home on sick leave for six months after Busaco.

This book, though expensive, is very handsomely produced, with illustrations and a score of excellent maps.

My Dearest Betsy, a "self-portrait" of William Gilpin (265pp. Denis Dobson. £6.95. 0 234 72036 0) is a biographical study of Gilpin, headmaster of Cheam School and country parson. The editor Peter Benson uses the letters and notebooks of sixty years to cover Gilpin's life from 1778 when he became headmaster at the age of twenty one up to his death at the age of ninety in 1848. The book includes the letters written to his wife during their courtship and the numerous jottings on parish subjects.

From vanguardism to fascism

By Herbert Southworth

La Gaceta Literaria
Volume I, Nos. 1-72. 470pp.
Volume II, Nos 73-96. 388pp.
Volume III, Nos 97-123. 424pp.
Vaduz, Liechtenstein: Topos Verlag.

The first number of the fortnightly *Gaceta Literaria* appeared in Madrid on January 1, 1927, and, except for a coupling of two numbers, it appeared regularly for five years and one fortnight, until No. 121, January 15, 1932, then skipped two weeks to No. 122, February 15, and finally ended its life with No. 123, on May 1, 1932. Its influence on the Spanish cultural scene of its time was immediate and undeniable. It was one of the two most significant literary publications of the 1920s in Spain, the other being Ortega y Gasset's *Revista de Occidente*. Ortega saw no competitor in the brash newcomer, and in fact he gave to the *Gaceta*, as author of the first article on the first page of the first number, the blessing of the arch-representative of the generation of 1915.

The prime and pervading influence on the *Gaceta* throughout its lifetime was that of its "director-fundador", Ernesto Giménez Caballero. He was born in Madrid in 1899 and studied philosophy and literature at the Universidad Central, before going to the University of Strasbourg as *lector* for the school year 1920-21. He then returned to Spain for his military service and was sent to Morocco just after the disastrous battle of Annual. His experiences in colonial warfare served as the basis for his first book, *Notas marruecas de un soldado*, published at his father's printing plant in 1923. This novel—which denounced the graft and inefficiency of Spain's army in Morocco—had a *succès de scandale* and the author was thrown into a military prison, but quickly released.

Giménez Caballero called himself a "grandson" of that terrible year of 1898, and his *Gaceta* was the voice of the "generation of '27". It was also the sounding-board for Spanish *vanguardismo*, for surrealism, literary innovations and experimental modes of writing. Spain made a considerable contribution to the agitated artistic and literary worlds of the 1920s: Dalí, Picasso and Miró were well known to the readers of the *Gaceta*, as was Luis Buñuel. The journal organized the first of Spain's cine-clubs. But Spanish literary surrealism was, of course, more difficult to translate than were Spanish paintings or motion pictures.

But when, in January 1944, finding myself in Madrid for a few days, I called upon Giménez Caballero, it was not to see the man who had written such *vanguardista* works as *Yo, inspector de alcantarillas* (1927) or *Hércules, jugando a los dados* (1929), but the author of the first coherent exposition of a Spanish fascist movement, *Genio de España*, 1932 (incidentally, one of the most frank and illuminating presentations of fascism ever made). The gradual development of a fascist programme for Spain can be traced through the pages of the *Gaceta*, which today appears as much a political publication as a literary one. Writers of fiercely opposed political opinions, who in less than a decade would be on opposite sides of the civil war barricades, were grouped together behind its literary facade. What they shared was an intense dislike of the unimaginative dictatorship of General Miguel Primo de Rivera.

By 1929 tension was beginning to appear in the midst of this literary camaraderie, just as Primo de Rivera's time was also running out. On February 1, 1929, Giménez Caballero published on the first page of the *Gaceta* an article entitled "Carta a un compañero de la joven España". This was in reality the preface to his translation of Curzio Malaparte's *Italia barbara* and had been inspired by a letter Giménez Caballero had received from a *lector* in Spanish at the University of Göteborg, Ramón Iglesias Parga. The latter confessed to the strong attraction that a fascist movement for Spain would hold for him. Giménez Caballero elaborated on this letter with his own profession of fascist faith. Significantly, he insisted that the Spain of 1929 was not fascist, despite the popular linking of fascism and dictatorship: "A defensive situation rather than an offensive one. Of harsh police rather than of disrespectful condottieri, terrible adventurers, bold hidalgos."

This declaration produced the inevitable reactions, and on the front page of the *Gaceta* of April 1, 1929 there was an unsigned explanation: the article-preface was a literary work, not a political pamphlet; it was publicity for a book and therefore a normal contribution for the *Gaceta*. Four months later, a young intellectual, Ramiro Ledesma Ramos, who wrote for the Gaceta and also for the *Revista de Occidente* and who was later to be the primary founder of Spain's fascist movement (and author of two excellent expositions of fascist theory: *Discurso a las juventudes de Espana*, and *¿Fascismo en España?*) came to the defence of his editor with such phrases as "Giménez Caballero is providential in this hour of Spain . . . a rare flower of culture. . . . Men like him are generally, in honour of their vigour, assigned to the difficult posts. Reciprocally, the greatest victories also belong it them."

In February 1931, a few weeks before the proclamation of the Republic, Ledesma Ramos and Giménez Caballero, with eleven other young Spaniards, launched, under the title "La conquista del Estado", Spain's first effort at an organized fascist movement. During all the years of the *Gaceta*, in fact, Giménez Caballero had been pursuing his personal political ends.

From its first issue, *La Gaceta Literaria* announced a pro-Jewish position, publishing an article by Américo Castro entitled "The Jews", in which he wrote: "In truth, we have been lacking something since the Jews went away, and nothing equivalent has taken their place." Frequently, during 1927 and 1928, the journal included a section headed "Postales ibéricas", which contained short items of news about cultural activities in certain Iberian regions, such as Catalonia, Levante, Portugal, etc; but frequently under this heading the reader found information about Sephardic literary endeavours which, although they took place outside the geographical limits of Iberia, were nevertheless considered as "Iberian". The pro-Sephardic interests of the *Gaceta* increased greatly when, during the autumn of 1930, Giménez Caballero, sponsored by Menéndez Pidal, was sent on an official mission to visit Sephardic centres in places such as Sarajevo, Corfû, Salonika, Sofia, Constantinople and Smyrna, where he gave talks, collected Hebrew-Castilian texts and, according to the *Gaceta*, "drew up a step-by-step programme for Spanish [sic] expansion in the Near East, taking as its base the Spanish [sic] communities." Five *lectores* were despatched to teach Spanish in Balkan universities, and in 1931, exhibitions of Spanish books were held in Bucharest and Salonika.

In 1931, popular thinking did not associate anti-semitism with fascism; it was only in 1933, with the advent of Hitler to power, that anti-semitism took on the brown shades of Nazism, and it was not until 1938 that the Blackshirts of Mussolini adopted an anti-semitic policy. The little anti-semitism that appeared from time to time in Spanish fascism came from the age-old traditons of the Spanish Catholic church. But, a vigorous defender of the exiled Sephardim in 1931, Giménez Caballero, during the Civil War and later became a self-declared anti-semite, so that his earlier adventures in reconciling the banished Sephardim with modern Spain can be seen in their real context: of cultural imperialism.

The gestures the *Gaceta* made to knit closer ties between Spain and her former colonies in America were more heavy-handed. This campaign opened on April 15, 1927, with an unsigned article on the front page entitled "Madrid, intellectual meridian of *Hispanoamérica*." Two fundamental arguments were presented. One was that such expressions as "Latin America" and "Panamerica" were inexact and anti-Spanish, and simply reflections of the propaganda emanating from Paris and Washington; the correct terms were "Hispanoamérica", or "América española" or "Iberoamérica". The other was a protest against the "large parade of students, writers and artists [from Spanish America] moving toward France and Italy". These people, it was argued, should come to Madrid. The *Gaceta* article provoked angry reactions in Argentina but had little lasting effect.

Just as the Nazi Germans flattered their feelings of superiority by torturing and killing Jews, so the Spanish falangists got their kicks from pushing around the Peninsula's cultural minorities: Catalans, Basques, Galicians, etc. It may, therefore, seem contradictory that Giménez Caballero and the *Gaceta* should have been in the vanguard for the "promotion of friendly relations among the various regions of the Peninsula." The very first number contained an article by A. Pi Sunyer in Catalan, a poem in *galego* and an article in Portuguese. More significant was the issue of December 1, 1927, given over entirely to a Catalan book fair held in Madrid under the auspices of the *Gaceta*, that is, of Giménez Caballero. Leading Catalan intellectuals and publishers came to Madrid, and the welcoming committee included the cultural élite, ranging from the Duke of Alba, Menéndez Pidal and Ortega y Gasset to the socialists Jiménez de Asúa and Araquistain. In the course of the banquet which closed the festivities, Giménez Caballero made the bold proposal that the Central University of Madrid, just as it offered courses in Italian, German and French, should teach peninsular non-Castilian tongues like Catalan.

This effort at Catalan-Castilian reconciliation failed, if I have read correctly between the lines in the *Gaceta*. When Giménez Caballero and other *Gaceta* collaborators flew to Barcelona in January 1928 for a return visit, they were coldly received. The generous-sounding language of the *Gaceta* was in reality that of Spanish fascism, of Spanish imperialism, limited by the reality of the moment to *cultural* imperialism. Giménez Caballero revealed his true intentions toward Catalonia in the pyrotechnic prose of his 1931 book, *Trabalenguas sobre España*:

> We shall admit the discussion of the Catalan 'problem' and its final consequences, provided that at the same time there be discussion and solution of the other peninsular problems: Portugal, Gibraltar, the lands of Oc, Morocco, Mediterranean and Balkan policy, the policy of ethnic minorities such as the Jews of the Spanish Fatherland, Hispanic-American policy.
>
> That is to say, the activating of a common, integral tradition. That is to say, the annunciation of a myth of such luminosity in the Iberian sky, that to commit ourselves or throw off ballast interests us only as a means to gain altitude and see more closely the heavenly harmony of all of a lost empire.

The false literary brotherhood collected around the *Gaceta* dissolved with the arrival of the Republic, and Giménez Caballero, feeling himself abandoned as the "Robinsón literario de España", edited the entire text of six of the twelve last numbers of the periodical (August 15, 1931—May 1, 1932). In the following months, he published three political books: *Genio de España* (1932), *Manuel Azaña* (1932) and *La nueva catolicidad* (1933). *Genio de España* was not only a remarkably frank (and exuberantly phrased) disquisition on Fascism – in Spain or elsewhere – but it also marked the rupture between the author and Ortega y Gasset. The latter, in his *España invertebrada*, had coloured in a miserable fresco of Spanish decadence up to 1898 and beyond, into the regional struggles of autonomy and *separatismo*. Giménez Caballero accepted Ortega's chronological account of Spanish disintegration since 1580 but challenged his one-time mentor as to the ineluctability of the continuing decline, and affirmed his confidence in the capacity of Spanish fascism to halt further deterioration of Castile's unitary peninsular position and even to start up again an imperial reconquest.

When the Civil War broke out, Giménez Caballero was in Madrid; he escaped from the capital in October 1936, disguised as "Monsieur Bonafoux" and eventually arrived in the Rebel Zone, where to his undoubted surprise he found that the Spanish Falange had for the first time in its existence a flourishing organization. He immediately put on his *camisa vieja*. When Franco and Serruno Suñer, as representatives of the military and the traditonal landowning oligarchy, foreclosed their mortgage on the Spanish fascist movement, they were taking a lease of undetermined duration on the stage properties, the costumes, the scripts and the *mise en scène* of Spanish fascism, for all of which they had an urgent need in order to hide their own ideological poverty.

It would have been almost impossible for Franco and his conservative backers to carry out forty years of political, economic, social and cultural repression if they had not been able to conceal themselves behind the demagogic spectacle of Falangism during the first decade of Franquismo. Cries for the *Imperio* continued long after perceptive observers like Giménez Caballero had understood their emptiness. A vast bureaucratic structure was set up to give jobs to the Falangists as payment for the use of their equipment, and they deserved every *duro* the oligarchy granted them. Among the happy receivers of privileges, positions and prebends was Giménez Caballero, whose life after 1936 was that of an exemplary Spanish fascist; he was decorated by Hitler for his diligence as the foremost Spanish literary collaborator with the Nazis during World War Two and lived on his pre-war political capital, which today continues to pay him dividends.

Giménez Caballero's political writings were, if not always consistent, at times illuminated with flashes of rare insight. In a footnote to the 1938 edition of *Genio de España*, he offered a perhaps too candid observation concerning fascism: "There has existed in the world only one efficacious system to overcome this eternal ill-will between the *classes*: and this is: transfer the social struggle to another plane. Transfer it from the national plane to the international. The poor and the rich of a nation can come to agreement only when both decide to attack other peoples or lands where riches and power can be found for all of the aggressors . . . The expansion of the poor and the rich of a country, against other lands, is the force that constitutes the intimate motivation of the *Empire*." But he had a sufficiently clear political vision to realize in 1936 when he entered the Rebel zone that it was too late for "the poor and the rich" to come to an "agreement"; Spain was already hip-deep in a bloody civil war.

Of all of Giménez Caballero's literary work, there remains *La Gaceta Literaria*, which has now been admirably reproduced by Topos, with a new introduction by Giménez Caballero himself of five pages, illustrated with photographs. This is the best source book available for tracing Spanish cultural activities from 1927 to 1932. Where else can one find in one issue (March 1, 1927) poems by García Lorca, Alberti, Altolaguirre, Garfias and Prados? In every number there are notices of the books being published in the Peninsula and mention of who is in Madrid, in Seville or Barcelona, and frequently accounts of who attended this or that literary banquet. The activities of the Cine-Clubs are likewise faithfully detailed. Even if Giménez Caballero failed as a literary artist and political prophet, he succeeded as a literary editor.

With the treachery showing

By Gerry Ashton

GWYNNE EDWARDS:
Lorca
The Theatre Beneath the Sand
310pp, Marion Boyars. £12.
0 7145 2698 3

A few days before the start of the Spanish Civil War in July 1936 García Lorca, after a great deal of hesitation, decided to leave Madrid and join his family in Granada for their customary summer holiday. He never returned, because just over a month later he was murdered. As he was leaving on that fateful journey he entrusted a packet to his friend Rafael Martínez Nadal, with instructions that it be destroyed should anything happen to him when he was in Granada. Fortunately, Martínez Nadal did not destroy the complete contents of the packet, for it contained the manuscript of a play, *El público*, which Nadal had heard the poet read some years previously. The phrase "theatre beneath the sand" which Gwynne Edwards has incorporated into the title of his book is the theatre demanded by one of the characters in *The Public*, a true theatre in which surfaces are stripped off so that characters can, in Lorca's words elsewhere, "show their treachery, even be smelled".

The Public is an extraordinary and difficult play, the purpose of which is to shock its audience and destroy the conventional gap between audience and performers. It contains a performance of part of *Romeo and Juliet*, speaking horses, ambiguous sexuality, violent language, nudity. At times it is unintelligible, yet at the same time it is strangely familiar—Pirandello, Ionesco, Genet and Arrabal all come to mind as we read. Marcelle Auclair (who mysteriously becomes Marcel Auclair in Dr. Edwards's book), one of Lorca's friends in the 1930s, says that some of Lorca's closest associates were dismayed when they heard him read the work to them in 1930. Lorca himself, however, considered *The Public* to be the best thing he had ever written for the theatre, but admitted to Martínez Nadal that it would be unstageable for ten or twenty years. In fact, for many reasons, it remained unstaged for forty years, and even now it is not widely known.

Edwards's study sets out to place Lorca amongst the innovative writers of the twentieth century:

> The theatre of Lorca is . . . a theatre of technical advance and innovation. His stated aim of saving the Spanish theatre was part of a similar movement that championed elsewhere by such men of vision as Edward Gordon Craig, Reinhardt and Stanislavski, altered the face of European theatre in general. For Lorca, as with them, the realistic stagecraft of the nineteenth century had to give way to a much more vital and fluid concept of dramatic action in which dialogue, song, dance, movement and staging were all important elements. The powerful themes of Lorca's plays are thus expressed in a dynamic dramatic dialogue which, transforming ideas into memorable images, makes him one of the great communicators of our time.

Lorca's strongest impressions were always visual ones, and Gwynne Edwards's book convincingly discusses his theatre with this in mind, with ample reference to art, cinema and stagecraft. Paintings by Bosch and Goya, the art of friends such as Buñuel and Dalí, were part of Lorca's immediate experience, and to understand his theatre we must give proper consideration to the visual logic of colour and staging. Edwards is especially convincing in his discussion of Lorca's indebtedness to the puppet drama and the manner in which its techniques fuse with his more poetic or symbolic modes to create the great Lorcan characters of the rural tragedies, *Blood Wedding*, *Yerma* and *The House of Bernarda Alba*.

The discussion of *The Public*, where the author is dealing with unfamiliar and confusing writing, is extremely good. While clearly indicating where Lorca's work is innovative, Edwards nowhere forces his points, though he leads one persuasively to his conclusion that *The Public* is "a play whose meaning we often grasp intuitively rather than understand clearly".

The measure of man

By David Kirby

A.R. AMMONS:
Selected Longer Poems
104pp. W.W. Norton. $12.95.
0 393 01297 2

Ammons is hard to read, not because he is hard to understand, but because his vatic poems make the reader want to get everything from them. Ammons's usual persona is a prophet in the sense that E. M. Forster meant the word – not that he predicts outbreaks of war or encounters with handsome strangers but that he speaks as though inspired. A glance at some of the shorter poems (using the texts in *Selected Poems 1951-1977* and *Diversifications*) bears this out. In an early one, "Bees Stopped", the persona derives complete satisfaction from his understanding of nature's quiet but ceaseless activity. He sees nothing moving in the distance, but then he bends to the ground "and life was everywhere/so I went on sometimes whistling". In another early poem, "The Wide Land", nature's noisier aspects are broached, but still the persona is happy. The wind blinds him and then apologizes, yet the doughty persona is unflappable: "No I said you don't have/to explain/it's just the way things are/Blind in the wide land I/turned and risked my feet to loose stones and sudden/alterations of height." Here the persona seems to be saying that though he may be blind and stumbling, he is as happy as a clam. Bee song or blizzard: anything nature throws his way is fine with him.

Lest this persona seem smug and overweening, a third poem from roughly the same period should be cited as evidence that he is taking his vatic duties seriously. In "Choice" the persona comes to a stair that goes in both directions. He spurns "the airless heights" and sinks into what seems to be "the inundating dark", but there is a surprise in store: "millenniums later waking in a lightened air/I shivered in high purity/and still descending grappled with/the god that /rolls up circles of our linear/sight in crippling disciplines/tighter than any climb". Though he tries to descend, the persona ends in a place much like the airless heights he wanted to avoid. The idiot happiness of the two earlier poems is absent here; the persona takes seriously his struggles with a deceitful god and reveals that he is aware of the serious and possibly dangerous implications of "loose stones" and "sudden alterations of height".

The persona's awareness of his awareness grows as Ammons's career develops. In "Dunes" and "Center" he says "Firm ground is not available ground" and "nothing gets/caught is still". A speech about poem, entitled "Mountain Talk", quoted here in its entirety, combines the persona's joy in nature (which characterizes "Bees Stopped" and "The Wide Land") with his understanding of his inability to apprehend nature (as seen in "Dunes" and "Center"): "I was going along a dusty highroad/when the mountain/across the way/turned me to its silence:/Oh, I said, how come/I don't know your/massive symmetry and rest:/ speechless, said the mountain,/would you want/to be lodged here with/a changeless prospect, this/to an unalterable view: so I went on/counting my numberless fingers."

It is clear that Ammons is hearing out William James's belief that you ought not to distinguish where you cannot divide, yet sometimes you must. Temperatures have to be taken, cuts to be made. The trick is to cut cleanly, and there are few surgeons (dentists than Ammons. His short lines, his overall brevity, his avoidance of punctuation marks other than the occasional comma and that quick stop-and-go colon are the hallmarks of his minimalism, his exquisitely unencumbered technique. "For Harold Bloom", the last poem in *Selected Poems 1951-1977* and one of the longest poems in the book (though it is only a page), expresses the persona's struggle with the central paradox of Ammons's poetry, namely, that it is necessary to distinguish though never delineate. The poem that expresses best the poet's (especially the prophet-poet's) need to continue is "Measure", which says that the objects of nature "promote the measure" and that there is no "other measure but man". The trick is to measure in the most judicious and subtle way.

For some reason the critics who have attempted to take Ammons's own measure have been prone to use other writers as their yardsticks. His thought and art has been compared to that of Henry Vaughan, Sir Thomas Browne, D'Arcy Thompson, Emerson, Thoreau, Whitman, Gerard Manley Hopkins, Pound, Eliot, Wallace Stevens, William Carlos Williams, Roethke, Dylan Thomas, and Robert Creeley. A list of such length of poets of such brilliance almost precludes additional comparisons, but perhaps its self-evident appropriateness will permit the suggestion of one more name: that of Stephen Crane. His other roots notwithstanding, Ammons characteristically writes like Crane at his best (though Crane was not at his best very often, at least as a poet). He recalls that Crane who wrote "If love loves,/There is no saying dark enough/For the dark pine that kept/Forever trying the window latch". She examines with peculiar detachment the anxieties, frustrations and, sometimes, the hallucinations that pertain to family life. As early as *Firstborn* (1968), Glück's women were portrayed as passive victims of marriage. One voice, in "Bridal Piece" laments:

> Our honeymoon
> He planted us by
> Water. It was March. The moon
> Lurched like searchlights, like
> His murmurings across my brain—
> He had to have his way.

Since then Glück has matured enormously, now referring, in "Epithalamium", to "the terrible charity of marriage". In "Autumnal", a poised and haunting poem, she says,

> The word
> is *bear*: you give and give, you empty
> yourself
> into a child. And you survive
> the automatic loss. Against inhuman
> landscape,
> the tree remains a figure of grief; its form
> is forced accommodation. At the grave,
> it is the woman, isn't it, who bends,
> the spear useless beside her.

Between *Firstborn* and her new book, *Descending Figure*, Glück published one other volume, *The House on Marshland* (1975), a book full of blazing little legends recalling Blake's realm of Generation, in which fertility degenerates into the rote grind of witless reproduction. Glück pictures that world as a place where "schools of spores circulate/behind the shades, drift through/gauze flutterings of vegetation". In characteristic fashion the mood of the opening poem of that book hovers between harvest and pestilence. Working in a symbolist mode, Glück cannot be pinned to a specific interpretation; childbirth appears to be the poem's subject, but other possible meanings radiate from it.

Among the most affecting poems in the new book is "The Gift", cast in the form of a prayer for her son, who is "so little, so ignorant", and just beginning to talk. He stands at the screened door, crying "*oggie, oggie*", "and sometimes / a dog will stop and come up / the walk". This happy accident confirms the child's simple faith in language; his mother prays that he may believe it was no accident at all but evidence of a magical link between language and vision. Glück, in poem after poem, explores the possibility of this link, although she knows that it may not exist. In "Illuminations", again about her son's early attempts at speech, she celebrates the simply mystery of word and object:

> Last winter he could barely speak...
> I moved his crib to face the window;
> in the dark mornings
> he would stand and grip the bars
> until the walls appeared,
> calling *light, light*,
> that one syllable, in
> demand or recognition.

In a final sequence called "Lamentations" the implicit mythos (in Northrop Frye's sense of myth as the organizing principle of literary form) of *Descending Figure* becomes explicit. Glück has attempted a revision of *Genesis* in which the lapse into creation, which includes the separation of the sexes, Glück adds to this the separation of the woman from her own body, in a cycle of four terse poems, she moves from incarnation, with "the woman mourned, the man / branching into her body", to the birth of the child "that grew between them / as they slept". Out of this generation the race of man evolves, on whose flesh "the wounds show clearly / the words on a page". The association of words with wounds is not accidental, for each of these poems registers a particular stab. The cycle ends with God abandoning from the garden into heaven. "How beautiful it must have been, / the earth, that first time / seen from the air", Glück writes, blending despair with a sense of wonder. This same mixture of loss accounts for the originality of *Descending Figure*.

After the Fall

By Jay Parini

LOUISE GLÜCK:
Descending Figure
48pp. Ecco Press. $9.95.
0 912 94671 7

Louise Glück's personae occupy the same tormented ground as the woman in Frost's "The Hill Wife", who has "no saying dark enough/For the dark pine that kept/Forever trying the window latch". She examines with peculiar detachment the anxieties, frustrations and, sometimes, the hallucinations that pertain to family life. As early as *Firstborn* (1968), Glück's women were portrayed as passive victims of marriage. One voice, in "Bridal Piece" laments:

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A few of Glück's poems seem frankly autobiographical, but in general her work is peopled with ghostly figures caught in paradigmatic struggles, such as husband against wife or child against mother. Hunger is a prime motivating force in her world, and the fear of death casts a shadow over the small joys that occur almost gratuitously. In "The Fear of Burial", she forces us to adjust our angle of vision in conformity with her own, which is original and strange:

> In the empty field, in the morning,
> the body waits to be claimed.
> The spirit sits beside it, on a small
> rock—
> nothing comes to give it form again.
>
> Think of the body's loneliness.
> At night pacing the sheared field,
> its shadow buckled tightly around.
> Such a long journey.
> And already the remote, trembling
> lights of the village
> not pausing for it as they scan the rows.
> How far away they seem,
> the wooden doors, the bread and milk
> laid like weights on the table.

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For love of fragments

By Ruth Padel

GUY DAVENPORT:
Archilochos, Sappho, Alkman
Three Lyric Poets of the Late Greek Bronze Age
176pp. University of California Press.
0 520 03823 1

Guy Davenport has a notion both of the ancient world and of what is poetic (in language and in subject-matter) which excludes the demotic and the humdrum: that notion is somehow out of date (of our date, and the date of the poetry he is translating) and limited. He counterfeits the authority of classical scholarship in the tone of his introduction and in the physical appearance of his text, which is spangled with the square brackets by which scholars conventionally mark where papyri break and words are illegible or lost. But his statements do not have the authority they appear to have. To say that "the archpoet Homer had written the two poems of Europe; never again would one imagination find the power to move two epics to completion and perfection" has an optative gallantry about it, but its truth vanished sixty years ago. Nor, perhaps, should Davenport let himself call the Archaic Age the Late Bronze Age. As the palace at Knossos does not stand among dog-rose (in the singular) and doves — there are a lot of sparrows, and plumbago, but these are not the same — scholarly accuracy is sacrificed for poeticism.

Davenport's introduction is very poetic, a brilliant historical romance, and the way it is poetic illustrates the source of its inspiration: Imagism (Hilda Doolittle figures in both the introduction and the notes), and that kind of fragmentation of reality or perception best illustrated in the short story, especially the stories of Eudora Welty, to whom this book is dedicated. Imagism stimulated some lovely writing; but as a movement in poetry it ended before 1920, partly because a love of fragmentation can only go so far. In the short story it had a richer, longer life. Each short story in a Eudora Welty collection, for instance, is a lesson from a lost floor, in a world of little pieces. Reality is rare, small, bitty: a hummingbird. And Davenport's archaic Greece is another such hummingbird. He presents a dangerously seductive, glamourized vision of a world in which "all was bronze, terra cotta, painted marble, dyed wool, and banquets".

Davenport's underlying aim in the translations themselves is modest. He says that they are "without any authority except the dubious one of sentiment" (*ah dubious?*); that his "starting-point was the poems and not the Greek language". He offers four translations of the "Parthenion" in sequence, which suggests a slightly confusing notion of the kind of job a translation ought to do. He has done a "multiple" one: "first, to graph the text . . . as literally as possible; . . . second in octosyllabic couplets to indicate something of the music and fanciful imagory; third, to conjecture the full shape of the poem . . . with no attempt at translating; and fourth to make the nearest possible faithful version, to show how phrase follows phrase." This plan allows him great freedom to explore different possible tones and meanings. But the four versions are surprisingly similar. The singers compose someone, possibly Hagesichora, who is possibly their songleader, to a horse, which is somehow outstanding, possibly in beauty or height or speed. In Davenport's first version she becomes a choirmaster compared to a stallion:

> our choirmaster,
> Who stands among us as in a pasture
> One splendid stallion
> Paws the meadow, a champion racer,
> A horse that runs in dreams.

In the third version, this important contrast between male and female comes over more loudly: Hagesichora

> Among us like a stallion among its mares,
> their eyes
> A horse from a dream and not of this
> world,

If the intention was to stress the underlying eroticism of the poem, it is odd to make it heterosexual. The fourth version, the best, is not much different, except rythmically, and in the look of the thing on the page:

> our mastersinger
> must come first,
> the sleek, galloping
> stallion,
> winner of races,
> stands apart
> as if seen in a dream.

The best things in the book, surprisingly, are the smaller fragments – single lines and words. In them Davenport manages to reproduce the soaring experience of flicking through *Poimn Melicl Graeci* from Sappho's "a convent of cuiery" to Archilochus' "Bare-Lister".

But *poeme melici Grabi* have had a terrible burden on Western poetic traditions, and to idolize them for being fragmented is to distort them. Most people who read them now have to work out their own relation to these relics as fragments or wholes, and to face again the old challenge of the Greek heritage in English poetic traditions. This new translation will not help them, because it is not new enough.

A Visit to the Big House

> The world is either round
> Like a goldfish bowl, or wide and flat
> As a grand four-poster (itself a miniature
> Elizabethan theatre).
>
> I imagine making love
> In such a bed; here heaven's
> Within arm's reach, and behind all that,
> Beyond the grinning cupids, my ancestors
> Stare down in expectation of an heir.
>
> The goldfish, meanwhile,
> Are mouthing silent platitudes
> To ornamental pools, the horizon blurs
> With approaching rain and the final tourists
> Scatter across the terrace in plastic macs.
>
> Later, in the small hours,
> When the full-length mirrors reflect each other
> Across empty rooms, the doorknobs gleam
> Like skulls in their submarine kingdom.

Charles Boyle

At the court of the Gonzaga

By Denis Stevens

IAIN FENLON:
Music and Patronage in Sixteenth-Century Mantua
2 vols. Cambridge University Press. £25.
0 521 22905 7

When the fourteen-year-old Mozart heard what might charitably be described as an indifferent performance of Hasse's *Demetrio* at the opera in Mantua, the artistic life of the city had been a ghostly legend for well over a century. Wrested by force from the Bonacolsi family in 1328, Mantua alternately languished and flourished under the Gonzaga rule until, by weakness, it perished some three hundred years later. Not a bad innings, one might say, for a largely crooked, corrupt, and violent team; and they met with the ignominious end that such tyrants deserve. Had the macaronic Folengo's Baldus sung of a later age, he might well have found the Gonzaga either go-go or ga-ga, depending on their current mania – religion, sex, alchemy, dwarf-culture or spendthrift libertinism, but as it was he contented himself with songs in Italian, French and Spanish, in which he was joined by his three companions.

This delicate tint of internationalism in Catholic (and to a lesser extent Jewish) artistic culture in Mantua during the sixteenth century is echoed in some of the texts set by Gisches de Wert, one of the greatest composers to serve the Gonzaga. He, a healthy transplant from the north of Europe, put down roots in Mantua and drew up into himself the rich distillations of its musical past; yet he was not impervious to the Spanish influence of nearby Milan, or to the French blandishments of Savoy, as his delightful four-part songs readily prove.

It is one of most appealing features of Iain Fenlon's book that he never loses sight of the many cross-currents of culture that coloured the artistic life of the city in its finest years. His introductory chapter on the origins of that movement sets the scene in masterly fashion, allowing the reader to assess, and even experience to some extent, the remarkable effects of Isabella d'Este's devotion to the arts. Where would the *frottola* composers have been without her constant encouragement? Sometimes they were so anxious to serve her that they wrote in haste and almost in regret, as Marco Cara did in April of 1503 when she was away on a short visit to Ferrara.

Ercole Gonzaga, Isabella's brilliant and learned son, carried her inspiring example of maternal benevolence onwards and upwards, seeking out composers of the calibre of Jacquet, originally from Brittany but later so closely identified with his cardinal patron that he became known as Jacquet of Mantua. One of Ercole's memoranda about Jacquet appears here in facsimile (p66) and in transcription (p174)—where "via commetto" should surely read "vi commetto"—and shows how concerned was the cardinal with his servant's well-being. If Maestro Jacquet requires money for writing or performing music, then let him have it at once without recourse to me. What a difference between this attitude of enlightened generosity and that of Duke Vincenzo and his three sons, who treated their composers—Monteverdi in particular—with such meanness and neglect!

Dr Fenlon's footnotes, richly endowed throughout the book with references to archival sources as well as to general bibliography, include a hint that Cipriano de Rore may at one time have been in Ercole's service. It would be a welcome contribution to scholarship if, further proofs of this association could be found, for Rore's biography is far from being a clear and amply-focused picture. Yet he must have had something to do with the Gonzaga as early as 1543, perhaps even slightly earlier, for his second book of five-part madrigals (1544) contains a wedding song, "Cantiamo lieti il fortunato giorno", which ends with a reference to "il fiero Marte e l'unica Gonzaga".

In the third chapter, we move on to the third generation after Isabella's, that of Guglielmo Gonzaga, founder of the chapel of Santa Barbara and instigator of a fascinating as well as fruitful correspondence with Palestrina. Of particular interest to English readers is the fact that Alessandro Striggio, who thought nothing of performing four-part polyphony on the viola da braccio (and was highly praised for so doing by Cosimo Bartoli), wrote a forty-part motet for the reception in Florence of Cardinal Ippolito d'Este, making use of a specially written text, "Ecce beatam lucem". That was in July 1561; and since forty-part motets are not the kind of thing to be tossed off on a lazy summer afternoon and then forgotten about, the resourceful Striggio—who could just as easily set to music the chattering of washerwomen or the animated conversation of card-players—ventured into the well-kept field of *contrafactum* and substituted a new text suitable for a wedding. This new version was sent as a gift honouring the wedding of Guglielmo Gonzaga and Eleonora of Austria in 1561, and in view of its unusual nature it may well have crossed the English channel inside Striggio's baggage when he set out for what was to be a highly successful visit to London in 1567. There he would have met at least some of the Queen's musicians and almost certainly the most illustrious of their number, Thomas Tallis.

Three years prior to this, a similar meeting could have taken place in London between Tallis and Antonio de Cabezón, then a member of the chapel of Philip II of Spain; and it was Cabezón's music that dominated Henestrosa's collection of sacred and secular works published in 1557 and featuring a forty-part anonymous motet prefaced with the tag *Unum colle Deum*. The notion of music in a multiplicity of parts was very much in the air at this time, and it is highly likely that the Italian "song of thirty parts" mentioned in Thomas Wateridge's commonplace book (reporting a conversation harking back to the time of Thomas Duke of Norfolk) was Striggio's revised version of his Florentine motet. The change from forty to thirty parts could have been due to an error of transmission.

Of even greater import is the fact that the Duke of Norfolk, who heard the "Italian song", wondered whether an Englishman could not do as well, and, as senior man, Tallis apparently took up the challenge and composed "Spem in alium", whereupon the duke, after hearing it sung, presented Tallis with a gold chain. The Striggio motet was later performed at the marriage festivities of the Duke of Bavaria and Renée of Lorraine in 1568 (the conductor being Orlando di Lasso), while Tallis's polyphony sounded forth with a new English text at the coronation of Charles I, who was soon to purchase some of the Gonzaga art treasures, still to be seen at Hampton Court.

Mantua, less flamboyant than Florence, less seductive than Venice, clearly played a not unimportant part in the musical counterpoint that straggled across a disunified continent. It has drawn to it not only researchers—Canal, Davari, Bertolotti, and in our own times Claudio Gallico and Pierre Tagmann, but also distinguished authors who have brought its occasional glories to a wider public, notably Maria Bellonci (*I segreti dei Gonzaga*) and Henry Reed, whose radio feature "Vincenzo" was a masterpiece of its genre. One of our early music groups made its debut at the City of Bath Festival twenty years ago with a programme entitled "Music at the Court of Mantua". These materials were all concerned in the main with the final phase of Mantuan artistic glory under the inspired though often wayward guidance of Duke Vincenzo.

The last chapter of this book does much to explain the sometimes bizarre mélange of patronage and pusillanimity that characterizes Vincenzo's "perhaps yes, perhaps no" view of court entertainment. Despite the elaborate nature of the work done by Guarini, working with musicians and actors in the hope and expectation of a worthy performance of *Il pastor fido*, it never really amounted to very much. The rival Florentines always seemed to be able to do better, as the author suggests in his excellent account of the *intermedi* of 1589. Striggio was also present on this occasion, as accountant rather than as composer, and Fenlon is surely right when he hints that "Alessandrino" (the future librettist of Monteverdi's *Orfeo*) took part as a violinist alongside his father. I hazarded the same guess in the Menuhin-Primrose book *Viola and Viola* (1976). The Striggios may not have ranked as the Ostrakhs of the sixteenth century, but they certainly left many an impression on Florence and Mantua.

Unexpected light is thrown upon minor figures among the Mantuan musicians, such as the virtuoso singer and performer on many instruments, Laura Bovia from Bologna, chosen as a suitable companion for the ill-fated first wife of Vincenzo, Margherita Farnese. She seems to have taken part in music-making not only in Mantua, but also in Florence, Bologna and Parma, yet surely her career is cut off too soon by stating that the last trace of her occurs in the title of a "Canzon La Bovia" in an organ book by Merulo, published in 1592. Her name, if not her mortal self (she would have been about sixty-seven or eight), re-appears in 1635, in a volume of *Sacri concerti* by the Bolognese composer Guglielmo Lipparino: a sonata for violin and violone with the title "La Bovia".

Inevitably a few names are missing in a work that sets out to be selective. Francesco Campagnolo, one of Mantua's finest singers, played a small but not insignificant part in the preparations for *Il pastor fido* in 1592, for he took the child role of Silvio, a name that crept into the play because one of its most enthusiastic protagonists was Agnese de Argolis, Marchioness of Grana, whose illegitimate son by Vincenzo was christened Silvio. The index too is selective though generally useful. The Invaghiti are omitted, but Vice is included (a reference to Vice and Virtue, two of the allegories of Correggio; and happily Virtue is also indexed).

If the most diaphanous phantom of a dissertation haunts this volume, it is no loss to the reader who (if he is fluent in reading Renaissance Latin and Italian) will derive much information from the generous selection of documents in Appendix Two. For musicians, a further volume is planned in order to present some of the compositions discussed in this book, from which musical examples have been excluded, presumably for lack of space. Otherwise, this ranks as a work of considerable and permanent value, despite the high price.

Discs under discussion

By William Mann

BRYAN CRIMP:
The Record Year
160pp. Duckworth. £9.95.
0 7156 1508 4

There is nostalgia in the title, perhaps, for older record collectors: in the early 1950s it belonged to a much slimmer volume, one of two supplements published between *The Record Guide* by Desmond Shawe-Taylor and Edward Sackville-West, and its 1955 revised edition (to which the present writer was a contributor). Four of us had to cover all the records of 1953: in 1979, the year now under review, Bryan Crimp had a very much larger number of classical records to deal with, but he has listed, heard, and reviewed all of them himself—what dedication!

We are always being told that the record industry is in a state of crisis, and Mr Crimp's commentary on the year's output begins by noting the take-over of Decca/London by other companies; he then goes on to discuss the records, which with scarcely fewer than 800 pages to list, and possibly on the ruinous plethora of duplication, even within one record company, is a tissue of desperate financial constraint.

But the 1979 brought into the British record catalogues much, nevertheless, that was either new or illuminating, as well as some fine old favourites. It was the year of Karajan's complete *Lulu*, with the Vienna State Opera Orchestra (give or take a few players) conducted by Pierre Boulez; of Maxwell Davies's first symphony, recorded soon after its first performance by Sinclair's Manchester Camerata; of Janáček's *Makropoulos Case* recorded by Mackerras's sovereign conductorship; of Bartok's first two piano concertos in a glorious partnership of the pianist Pollini and the conductor Abbado. Two more operas by Richard Strauss entered the catalogue for the first time, also Nicholas Maw's impressive *Life Studies* (properly singled out for praise), and much pre-classical music. Shostakovich and Sibelius gained copious new representation, the latter, *inter alia*, with a disc of solo piano music reorchestrated by its executant, Glenn Gould, in terms of spatial travel—one piece far on the right, the next close at hand, and so on. Still in the curio department, there was Beethoven's Emperor Concerto recorded in 1944, with Gieseking as solo pianist, in stereo—nine years before the pioneering Decca sessions.

For his sympathetic, reasoned survey of all this music, the author must be admired. His name is best known for his scrupulous, sensitive transfers of old records to modern LP discs, and about such reissues he is greatly informative, from whatever source the records come. He is also a stickler for style in presentation, ready to pounce on romantic music, ready to pounce on sloppy Bach, or soupy orchestration of classical scores; and he has a ready readiness to new music, even when he finds it tough going.

One would expect Mr Crimp's hackles to rise at Beecham's re-orchestrated Victorian-style *Messiah*, but he is a Beecham fanatic, and even this notorious musical solecism receives plaudits. Crimp's enthusiasm is winning. He extols the virtues of the many Beecham centenary issues, and quickly reminds us that old performances have not necessarily been made redundant by later contenders.

As a commentator, particularly on musical performance, Crimp is firmly predicated, a patriot if not a chauvinist when discussing English music of a not oppressively vanguard nature, clearly unsympathetic to some highly admired singers, conductors and other musicians, but a right-minded interpreter of such composers as William Alwyn. He gets top marks for drawing attention to the "Callas-like" virtues of Joan Cross at Sadler's Wells before the Second World War, but on the whole he is an accurate rather than an eloquent writer about records, and one yearns in vain for any truly poetic response to a great performance such as distinguished the first *Record Guide*.

A random check of record numbers found several issues unlisted in the *Gramophone Quarterly Catalogue*, and others differently numbered. The disc source of cassette issues is not always given. It is disconcerting to read wrong dates for a composer, on Page 1 (a confusion between Isaac Albeniz and the earlier Matteo Albeniz), but thereafter accuracy seems the rule, though *Der Wortsreiss* and *Pagliacci* are both wrong. Stravinsky's Russian works are given French titles and spellings when English equivalents are generally accepted—*Le sacre du printemps* should be *The Rite of Spring*, and *Petrushka*, not *Petrouchka*, is to be preferred in an essay which is pro-English. Verdi's great opera, and its hero, are spelt both Don Carlos and Don Carlo ad lib. German song-titles are often inaccurately printed, those in French and Italian more correctly. Some imported issues are listed, but not discussed.

Even with an appendix of "Late Arrivals" the book was, sad to say, out of date by the time of publication, though ardent souls can always go hunting in specialist and second-hand shops for records no longer available. As a catalogue raisonné of records in 1979 it can be recommended.

Cossacking about

By Martin Cooper

IGOR MARKEVITCH:
Etre et avoir été
309pp. Paris: Gallimard

The author of this volume of memoirs was born in 1912 in the Ukraine, spent his childhood in Switzerland and France, travelled much in Europe as a young man and found himself in Italy when war broke out in 1940. We leave him there at the end of the volume—and of his first marriage—on the eve of his thirtieth birthday, a not very successful Franco-Russian composer about to become an Italian national and a very successful conductor.

Igor Markévitch himself is profoundly aware of the conflicting influences which made it difficult for him to find his own identity. As an unusually handsome and musically gifted boy he was "discovered" at the age of sixteen by Nadia Boulanger and Diaghilev, who between them determined the course of his life, both as artist and human being. The adulation by which he was surrounded was arbitrary and capricious; and it is difficult to imagine a more unrealistic introduction to the life of a working musician than to be paraded as a kind of mascot of the Ballets Russes in their last days under Diaghilev. Patronized and fêted by Cocteau and Valéry, Milhaud and the Princess of his set ("le cadavre de mon ami" as he describes it) to Tilsin's eye.

A post-Proustian style of philosophical and psychological reflection, loads a very French literary pollen to Markevitch's style; and even the dreams that he recounts seem to reflect his consciousness of being in some sense a "chosen vessel".

having to hawk his works in order to get them performed or published which eventually drove him into making his career as a conductor. In these memoirs Markévitch naturally speaks freely and fully about the works he composed during the 1930s – chiefly the oratorio *Le paradis perdu* and the orchestral *Iare* – but the fact that these works, though written forty years ago, have been all but completely forgotten in the meantime makes these passages of the book impossible to relate to any musical experience of the reader's. In his final chapter Markévitch announces an unexpected revival of interest in his compositions and looks forward to reliving in old age his youth as a composer.

As one of the latest additions to the chronicle of "smart" artistic society between the wars these memoirs possess a certain historical value. Ballet-lovers will find a number of things to interest them—personal reminiscences of Nijinsky, father of the author's first wife Kyra, in pathetic bitterness, and a passionate, detailed defence (against Stravinsky) of his choreography of the *Sacre*. Readers should perhaps be warned against being disheartened by the introductory rumbrough of Ukranian history and the list of *hetmans* (including Mazeppa) with whom the author claims family association and even more when he writes "my Cossack affiliations may not be paraded as a kind of mascot of the Ballets Russes in their last days under Diaghilev. Patronized and fêted by Cocteau and Valéry" (de Polignac) adored – and indeed all but deposed – by Marie-Laure de Noailles, the young man was repeatedly offered magnificent collaborations which for one reason or another (but fundamentally perhaps his immaturity) came to nothing.

What is more astonishing is that his composer at all in the circumstances; and we can understand that resentment at

The demand for democracy

By Abraham Brumberg

JOSHUA RUBENSTEIN:
Soviet Dissidents – Their Struggle for Human Rights
304pp. Boston : Beacon Press. $13.95.

Dissent in the Soviet Union has fallen on bad days. Sundry forms of petty harassment, arrests, banishments, emigration (forced or voluntary), and those deadly enemies of idealism – fatigue and disillusionment – have taken their toll. According to a recent issue of *Index on Censorship* (London, No. 4, 1980), twenty-four *samizdat* publications have been appearing in the Soviet Union, more or less regularly, over the past four years. The figure is astonishing, especially if we bear in mind the unspeakable conditions under which these journals are produced; yet it tells us little either about their contents or about their circulation and impact on the Soviet population. To judge by the most comprehensive periodic collection of *samizdat* materials published in the West, *The Samizdat Archives* (Munich), virtually all of the unofficial Soviet documents in recent years have been protests, petitions, or accounts of police and judicial repressions; very few of them are, unhappily, of any intrinsic intellectual interest. In addition, the signatories tend to be the same, with only a few new names appearing now and then.

Now to some these melancholy comments may seem sacrilegious. Yet surely it is no reflection on the courage of the several thousand people involved to suggest that they are no match for a powerful state bent on their extinction. Nor is it to imply that the "human rights movement" (or "democratic movement", as it is sometimes called) has been a failure. As Joshua Rubenstein demonstrates in his sympathetic account of the vicissitudes of this movement – an account based on copious documentary evidence as well as on extensive interviews with many of its participants now in the West – dissent has become an integral part of the Soviet political landscape. Only a "complete reform of the system", he says, "which no one expects, or a return to outright Stalinist methods, which many fear, could bring it to an end". However meagre its following, the movement has proved successfully, by refusing to show obedience, loyalty or fear, that a despotic government with totalitarian appetites can be challenged in areas crucial to its quest for legitimacy. By its very existence, it has set an example for many aggrieved groups in Soviet society (with whose struggles – except those of Soviet Jews – the book does not deal): religious believers, national minorities, even workers.

Emigration from the Soviet Union, once an altogether unthinkable option, has now become a distinct, if severely circumscribed, reality. Penalties for nonconformity are no longer as savage as in the past – thanks in large measure to those brave men and women who have openly insisted that the government observe its own laws, and who have helped to make the most flagrant violations of legality a matter of international concern. Soviet writers and intellectuals, either those within, on the fringes of, altogether unrelated to the "democratic movement", have been largely freed from the necessity of writing "for the drawer". To be sure, publication abroad followed – as has increasingly been the case – by living abroad, is a bitter experience for any creative artist, yet it is preferable to enforced silence at best, imprisonment or disappearance at worst.

The fact that so many Soviet artists and writers have been able to emigrate to and work in Western Europe and the United States has restored the continuity of Russian art and literature, so cruelly suppressed by Stalin. In addition, as Mr Rubenstein notes, the presence of thousands of former Soviet citizens outside their native country has provided the world with a vast reservoir of information about the Soviet Union, and has helped to dispel many of the illusions about the "fatherland of socialism" that abound in the West. Finally, dissent has become a factor in international politics, especially in East-West relations. President Carter's human rights policy, for all its ineptitude, inconsistencies, and paltry results, compelled Moscow at least to justify opinion, and to curb some of its more brutish instincts as well.

It may reasonably be argued that the relative relaxation of Soviet policies and the (also relative) liberalization of the Soviet system were brought about by objective imperatives, rather than by the emergence of organized dissent, and that the latter is simply one of the results of processes set in motion after Stalin's death. Yet it is true, too, that these processes, having facilitated the growth of dissent, have in turn been affected by it. Above all, Soviet dissidents, of whatever ideological persuasion, and however small their number, have given standards of moral courage and decency to a society which in the past had known little but abject fear, servility, venality, and double-think.

What about the future? Rubenstein is understandably reluctant to peer into the crystal ball, yet some reflections, however sombre, may be in order. Given the bloody-minded attitude of the current Soviet leaders there is little prospect of any relaxation in the war against those whom they chose to regard as their sworn enemies – and that goes as much for Solidarity in Poland as for the dissidents in the Soviet Union. For the time being, then, dissent, for all its admirable achievements, is probably destined to remain a marginal phenomenon of Soviet life. Its fortunes may conceivably improve. Yet – paradoxically and cruelly – a real opportunity for the "human rights activists" to sink roots in society at large may also invite the most disastrous consequences. The key to the future of Soviet dissent lies in the future of the Soviet Union and in the policies of its leaders. The rumblings of anger, frustration and discontent in the country are no longer below the surface; they are caused, *au fond*, by burgeoning economic and social problems of a political system unable to meet the needs of a modern industrial state and the rising expectations of its citizens. Military expansion abroad, whatever its temporary benefits to a regime of power, is no solution – certainly not in the long run. Nor is the continued reliance on coercion at home, on half-hearted or ad hoc economic palliatives, or on cosy commercial deals with West Germany and the United States (which, one hopes, will come to a decisive halt if Brezhnev follows in Hitler's footsteps and sends his tanks rolling into Poland). Viewed objectively, none of these measures is likely to help the Soviet Union extricate itself from the critical situation in which it is bound to find itself in the near future.

There are Western "Sovietologists" (such as Jerry Hough) who expect the Soviet regime to "accommodate itself" to the compelling forces for change, "rather than to resist them" (*How the Soviet Union is Governed*, 1980). Which is to say that either Brezhnev or his successors will eventually embark upon a number of basic economic (and hence political) reforms. In that case, of course, the "democratic movement", whose fundamental programme is that of evolution rather than of a radical transformation of the Soviet system, could play a more important role in Soviet politics.

I am afraid, however, that this optimistic "scenario" is but a devout wish not likely to be consummated. If history is any guide at all, the Soviet leaders may be expected to hold on for dear life and to continue their present policies, thus causing an ever-greater stagnation of the system, a further deterioration of the standard of living – and possibly (however apocalyptic this vision may seem to us now) a dire eruption of mass discontent. Should this come to pass, dissent may well change from an expression of moral protest into a mass-movement of outright political opposition. And then what? It does not take much imagination to foresee the response of a regime still addicted to the knout as the ultimate form of dialogue with its subjects. All told, then, the outlook is far from encouraging.

Tipping the scales

By Julius Lewin

JOHN D. JACKSON:
Justice in South Africa
239pp. Secker and Warburg. £7.95.
(Penguin paperback, £1.95)
0 436 22030 X

warned that he was himself to be "owned", left the country.

Jackson's book is the more telling in its indictment of white justice because the author does not strive for effects. He is a sincere and slightly old-fashioned believer in the possibilities of impartial justice regardless of race. He would have benefited by reading Albie Sachs's book with the same title, published in 1973. Sachs realized that the health of the legal system cannot be very different from the sick society which it serves. Mr Jackson is the latest in a line of lawyers appalled by the miscarriages of justice they witnessed. These lawyers are almost naive in retaining their belief in the rule of law as expounded by Albert Dicey in his classic book nearly a century ago. However, "most solicitors", as Mr Jackson says, "are completely unaware of what is happening in South African courts. Nor do most of them want to know. They believe in the nobility of the law and harbour that illusion of justice depicted by the blindfolded figure with the sword in one hand and the scales of justice in the other. Unfortunately, in South Africa the blindfold has been removed, the scales are unbalanced, and the sword is in constant use."

In the police state which South Africa has been, not since yesterday but for at least the past twenty years, the law hardly professes to be impartial between the state and its citizens—not that blacks are citizens. In 1965 the Secretary for Justice, the permanent head of the department, declared that legal aid for the poor was positively harmful because it would "undermine the administration of justice and would, moreover, be completely inconsistent with the general judicial and social pattern in the country". Yes, indeed. That is new.

The difficulties of desegregation

By Sandra Salmans

WILLIAM H. CHAFE:
Civilities and Civil Rights
Greensboro, North Carolina, and the Black Struggle for Freedom
436pp. Oxford University Press. £13.95.
0 19 502625 X

When the US Supreme Court ruled in *Brown v Board of Education* in 1954 that segregation in schools must end, Greensboro, North Carolina, was the first city in the South to announce that it would comply with the decision. Seventeen years later, in 1971, Greensboro actually integrated its schools, becoming one of the last cities in the South to comply with Federal desegregation orders. In *Civilities and Civil Rights*, William H. Chafe, a professor of history at Duke University, North Carolina, analyses this paradoxical behaviour of one of the leading cities in what was reputedly the South's most progressive state — and concludes that it was this very progressiveness that inhibited any real progress in civil rights for blacks.

Chafe's research focuses on the period from 1945 to 1975 during which Greensboro and the rest of the country witnessed the evolution, through peaceable rallies to bloody riots, of the modern civil-rights movement. But for readers already familiar with that era, his examination of Greensboro's historical background may prove more provocative. Between the end of the Civil War and the beginning of the 1900s, the blacks and whites of Greensboro often held comparable jobs, received similar wages, and lived in neighbouring houses. But around the turn of the century, according to Chafe, the threat of an anti-establishment revolt by poor whites and blacks led Greensboro's white elite to make scapegoats of blacks and to institutionalize white supremacy", with the object of driving a wedge of racial prejudice between the potential insurgents. Within a few years blacks were excluded from factory and clerical jobs, and confined to only for domestic service, while white factory workers suddenly elevated to a higher caste and intent upon their new-found racial superiority, became less apt subjects for unionization.

The conventional wisdom is that middle-class whites, sympathetic at heart to the black struggle for equal rights, hesitated only to placate the racist poor whites. But in Chafe's analysis, the primary resistance to civil rights in Greensboro came from the white leadership, including the Burlington mill-owning family. Unlike the rednecks who presided over less "progressive" Southern towns, Greensboro's ruling class envinced a benevolent paternalism toward the 35,000 blacks who represented one-fourth of the population; the problem was that the blacks were accordingly expected to respond with unfailing obedience. When white philanthropists financed an indoor swimming pool for the black community, for example, it was with the implicit understanding that the blacks would stay out of the "white" pool. Through such gentlemanly agreements, rather than the more obvious methods of the Klu Klux Klan, Chafe observes, Greensboro's blacks were kept in line.

The response to *Brown* by Greensboro and the state of North Carolina fits this pattern. While leaders elsewhere flamboyantly blocked schoolhouse doors, North Carolina's advisory committee on education — which included three blacks, all state employees — devised a local-option scheme that effectively allowed each community to continue to draw the colour line. Proponents of the so-called Pearsall Plan argued — without justification, in Chafe's view — that unless it was adopted, North Carolina's rednecks would rise in rebellion. As a sop to Washington, a few communities permitted token desegregation; these included Greensboro which, following the uneventful enrolment of a handful of blacks in an all-white school, was hailed by the press as a symbol of the "New South, suit with a new liberalism". The old South knew better. Wrote an envious school official from Little Rock, Arkansas, home of some of the ugliest anti-desegregation mobs: "You, North Carolinians, have devised one of the cleverest techniques of perpetuating segregation that we have seen."

Stalemated in the schools, the increasingly angry, black citizens of Greensboro turned their fire on other targets. In early 1960 four young men from Greensboro's black college entered the local Woolworth's, sat down at the whites-only lunch counter, and demanded to be served. It was the nation's first sit-in, the "coffee party" equivalent of the Boston Tea Party as a harbinger of revolution, and within weeks the technique spread to dozens of cities across the South. The sit-in spread across Greensboro, too, violating the gentlemanly code of conduct laid down by paternalistic whites and undermining the town's cherished image of itself as a liberal place. The sit-ins, which soon led to mass arrests and then to noisy protest marches, deeply offended the sensibilities of Greensboro's self-styled progressives. In an editorial that revealed much about white priorities, one Greensboro newspaper commented that the issue facing America "no longer concerns civil rights (such as school attendance or use of public facilities); it concerns civilities — the right of businesses to invite their own customers and the fairness of business practices".

As black frustration turned to rage, white Greensboro's civilities came under siege. In 1963 Greensboro became the home of the South's second-largest street demonstration against racial discrimination. By 1969 it had emerged as a centre of the black power movement in the Southeast, and black students and National Guardsmen in a series of armed confrontations that finally resulted in the fatal shooting of one black youth. By the violent standards of American race riots that was a small toll — but it shocked Greensboro's white elite out of any lingering complacency. Slowly blacks began to make real gains, including several important political appointments. But it was not until 1971, under growing pressure from Washington, that Greensboro fully desegregated its schools.

It was not only in Greensboro that genuine black advancement elicited a violent spur, and Chafe's conclusion that civilities and civil rights are incompatible should, scarcely come as a surprise — at least, to American readers. But by placing Greensboro under the microscope, he does provide an interesting insight into the forces within a community that resisted the wonderful ability to assimilate the appearance, if not the fact, of change. A decade after the incident at Woolworth's Greensboro's liberal recalls the mayor was bragging about the fact that he was the home of the nation's first sit-in, as if he had invented the electric lightbulb.

Diplomatic dance

By A. M. Rendel

M. S. BRUCE and ROGER BULLEN:
The Great Powers and the European States System 1815–1914
208pp. Longman. £8.95.
0 582 49134 7

The Concert of Europe has by now been played too often for anyone to expect some strikingly novel tune from a new interpretative study. Nevertheless the two authors, each a seasoned specialist in the diplomatic history of the hundred years from Waterloo to the First World War, have produced from their researches a careful and interesting explanation of the European states system.

Their book, however, compressed to the point of congestion, is not for the general reader, who will be irritated by the assumption that he, or she, has in mind the details of international conventions or treaties of long ago. There are parallels between the situation after the Napoleonic wars and the present day; they are both periods in which two powers, Russia and Britain then, and Russia and the United States now, stand out as dominant and under suspicion from weaker states. But the authors make no concessions to readability by pointing up contemporary parallels. Instead they address themselves uncompromisingly to the advanced student (who will be helped in particular by the ample bibliography for each chapter).

I found particularly convincing the account of the origins and effects of the Crimean War, and the contrast between Bismarck's statesmanship and the ambivalent antics of his successors when the growing power of the German Empire tested their self control. Quarrels outside Europe had little influence upon the system, the authors believe; but the growing threat to the monarchist establishment from liberal and social democratic forces inside Europe led them increasingly – and fatally – to encourage nationalism.

The assertion of monarchy

By Malcolm Vale

JOSEPH R. STRAYER:
The Reign of Philip the Fair
450pp. Princeton University Press. £19.50 (paperback, £7.50).
0 691 05302 2

"The handsomest of birds which is worth absolutely nothing ... such is our king of France, who is the handsomest man in the world and who can do nothing except to stare at men.": thus Bernard Saisset, bishop of Pamiers, compared Philip IV of France (1285-1314) with the owl, mocking the king's impassive stare and his habit of letting his agents and officers speak for him on public occasions. Joseph R. Strayer now gives us a long-awaited study from which Philip the Fair emerges as a "high priest of the religion of monarchy" who made his own decisions and let others, such as Guillaume de Nogaret, Pierre Flote and Enguerrand de Marigny, justify them and carry them out. This is a somewhat different interpretation of the reign from that presented by Philip's most recent French biographer, Jean Favier, who sees the king more often swayed by the influence of a dominant minister than does Professor Strayer. Saisset was clearly wrong when he saw the king merely as a good-looking cipher; Pope Clement V perhaps more accurate in seeing the reign as a steady descent from prosperity into adversity, determined very largely by the king's wars in Aquitaine and Flanders (1294-1303) and from which the kingdom of France never recovered. Strayer to some extent reinforces this contemporary assessment, but there is much in his book that is new.

The author builds upon his own earlier works, ranging from *Studies in Early French Taxation* (with Charles Taylor) of 1939 to *Les gens de justice de Languedoc sous Philippe le Bel* of 1970, to produce an exhaustively detailed picture of how the king's officers were recruited, rewarded and controlled. The reign was innovative in many respects: the Chambre des Comptes (the French equivalent of the English Exchequer) is shown to have existed by 1303 or a little earlier; the appellate jurisdiction of the French crown was firmly established although "appeals ... were relatively new in French jurisprudence"; and the Paris Parlement emerged as the guardian of royal judicial supremacy over the great magnates. Much recent historical writing has emphasized the extent to which French monarchical power at this period was a creation of the king's officers, and it is salutary to be reminded by Strayer that in the Parlement these men "knew the limits of royal power", and that it was not their decisions which led to the damaging and costly wars in Aquitaine and Flanders.

It is consequently to the king himself, and to the actions of his local, rather than central agents, that Strayer looks to explain the crises of Philip's reign. In his analysis, the great quarrel with Pope Boniface VIII resulted from the king's decision to tax the clergy for the Gascon war in 1296, and Philip's level-headed refusal to descend to a petty war of words with the pope seems to have inflamed Boniface's intemperate language and impelled him towards extremes of behaviour. We are left in no doubt of Philip's moral sincerity: the king appears genuinely to have believed the Templars, Boniface VIII, Bernard Saisset, Guichard, bishop of Troyes and his own daughters-in-law to have been irredeemably guilty of the scandalous crimes imputed to them. The book also underlines the remarkable fact that the French clergy had greater confidence in Philip and his government than in the papal curia, and the mutually accommodating behaviour of king and clergy at the height of the conflict with the papacy was clearly a significant milestone along the road towards Gallicanism.

Professor Strayer's account is rather less convincing when he turns to the king's relations with his neighbours. He is sometimes impatient of diplomatic and even military complexities: the course of Anglo-French negotiations during this critical period, he writes, can present the historian with "incomprehensible and often meaningless detail"; the Gascon war of 1294-97 "can be [and is] described in a few lines"; and his contrasts between Aquitaine and Flanders sometimes seem a little over-drawn. It was not only the Flemings who "had emotional and economic reasons for fearing French domination". The strength of the Anglo-Gascon wine trade, and the tenacious defence of regional privileges confirmed by the English connection, made conditions in Aquitaine more akin to those in Flanders than one is led to believe. With the exception of an excellent account of the financing of the Gascon war, Strayer brings no new insights into our understanding of this conflict, its course and its aftermath. That it was cripplingly expensive is obvious enough. Yet his general conclusion that "when little or no force was used, the gains were solid" applies equally to foreign affairs as to royal finance, taxation, judicial sovereignty and the affairs of the French church. Delay, constant nagging, and a readiness to compromise proved more effective than brute force, especially when the king's opponents were in many respects as strong as he. There were many things which the later Capetians had more will than strength to do, and Philip the Fair was no exception to this rule.

To a great extent the reign was a commentary upon the question which Strayer poses in his discussion of Aquitaine and Flanders: "how could Philip's conception of his rights and duties as king be reconciled with the existence of a highly organized and semi-independent system of local government?" Thirteenth and early fourteenth-century France was in some ways a federation of greater and lesser lordships, where in many areas Philip's conception of his rôle was at war with political and institutional realities. The "religion of monarchy" could never be allowed to rouse too many dissenters and heretics in the great fiefs such as Burgundy, Anjou, Foix or Artois lest monarchical rule was undermined by rebellion. Strayer argues that compromise was often imperative, and that Philip made his peace with the higher clergy and secular nobility better than with the towns both of Flanders and his own immediate domains. His legacy here was not a happy one. Yet even the magnates rose in defence of their regional liberties which the monarchy had threatened (however ineffectively) at the very end of the reign. The author shows that the noble leagues of 1314-15, however, did not attempt to abolish the judicial and administrative system that the king and his officers had created. They acted as the English baronage had acted in 1215. It was the abuse of the system, especially in the administration of royal justice at a local level, to which they objected rather than its existence.

Strayer sums up forty year's work upon his subject in the conclusion: "There were no civil wars in Philip's reign, no notable acts of treason, no executions of famous men, no plunderings of towns and villages". The Grand Master of the Temple might not have agreed with him, but with hind-sight modern readers may assent. Philip the Fair was very fortunate because – unlike his Valois successors – he was never confronted with a plausible rival claimant to his throne. The conditions pre-requisite for the Hundred Years War did not really exist during his reign.

This is, on the whole, a handsome and well-produced book, but there are rather more printing and proof-reading errors than one would expect, especially in Latin quotations. The illustrations are helpful, if sometimes a little cloudy, and the reproduction of a sketch (fig 5) drawn by an English scribe in the margin of the document recording an Anglo-French truce of 1298 is perhaps the most telling representation of the king. Philip confronts Edward I with a defiant glare more reminiscent of a prize-fighter than an owl. Professor Strayer leaves us with a lively picture of an assertive, even pugnacious, ruler, whose reign formed a crucial phase in the development of the French kingdom as a political and fiscal unit.

The liberal alternative

By Arnold Paucker

DONALD L. NIEWYK:
The Jews in Weimar Germany
226pp. Manchester University Press. £12.50.
0 7190 0828 X

When the Weimar Constitution removed from the Jewish citizens of Germany those last disabilities which had persisted throughout the chequered history of their emancipation, this overdue gesture was no guarantee for long-term security. Donald Niewyk in his *The Jews in Weimar Germany* deftly outlines their struggles and defeat, leaning heavily at times on some of his specialist predecessors, but adding a good measure of his own findings. Moreover he has presented us with the first full-scale history of Weimar Jewry. The sections on anti- and anti-semitism or the role of the Jews in Weimar culture, politics and economic life are familiar subject matter perhaps, though the point is well made that the Jews held no position of real power (army; heavy industry) in Weimar Germany.

In the Jewish community proper Niewyk conveniently distinguishes in three major chapters between the Liberal, the Nationalist and the Chauvinist Jew. No doubt one could add further categories but as a division of significant strands it works well enough. The inextricable link of the vast Jewish majority with Liberalism is amply demonstrated though one would wish for a clearer definition of the religious and the political Liberal. With the Zionist minority alternative there is a commendable emphasis on the special brand of humanist-Jewish nationalism which typified the German Zionist movement (Arab question) coupled with the curious conclusion that with all its service to Jewish self-esteem it might have damaged Weimar Jewry more than it benefited it. The still smaller National-German Jewish group, with its obsession with Eastern Jews, its negation of self-defence and its illusions about Nazi-Jewish rapprochement gets the short shrift it merits.

In the days of Weimar the German Jews not only kept their tested allegiance to liberal values, they had become staunch Republicans, and a tendency to Socialism showed itself ever more strongly. And Niewyk is on solid ground when he belabours those historians who with hindsight castigate the self-deluded German-Jewish community which fondly imagined that there was or ever had been "another" Germany. He is right to dismiss this tiresome fatalism. There were always two Germanies and an alternative to rabid nationalism offered itself almost to the very end. Jewish activists knew perfectly well the two traditions in German life, knew friend from foe, and how to assess their chances. They responded vigorously to the anti-liberal and anti-semitic trends and neither ignored nor indulged their adversaries. Though far from quiescent in the face of Nazism, they had to rely on the progressive forces in Germany to reassert themselves and could not have altered Jewry's fate in any significant way. The Jewish option for Liberalism was not, Niewyk says, determined by self-deception (bourgeois class interests were not entirely absent either), nor by a lack of choices (here one may quibble) but theirs was a genuine and deep commitment. Hitler must have realized, Niewyk writes, "that the Jews could have no place in a totalitarian Germany because they were the enemies, not just of his racialism, but of everything he and his National Socialist movement represented." It is a generous statement but the German Jews probably deserve it.

The empire-builder

By Norman Stone

ROBERT K. MASSIE:
Peter the Great
His Life and World
Victor Gollancz. £9.95.
0 575 02908 8

This is at least the third biography of Peter the Great to appear in recent years – its immediate competitors being Alex de Jonge's *Fire and Water*, and M. S. Anderson's scholarly work. This new book is aimed at a wide market, and it bears many of the hallmarks of the All-American Best Seller. It is, for a start, immensely long – 900 pages and a thousand words – and the publishers to which the author has evidently appealed to "George" and did his best to provide him with plenty for his money. Then when Peter is contemplating his "window to the West, we have a survey of Western civilization in the mid-1690s which is tourist-brochure prose at its worst: "At court and in the ballrooms of the nobility, ladies and gentlemen danced the gavotte and the minuet. France's trio of immortal playwrights, Molière, Corneille and Racine, probed deep into the foibles of human nature . . . Hobbes . . . Vermeer . . . density of gases . . . Newton . . . etc." To be fair, such passages do not occur very often, but when they do, they go on for pages, and it is a pity that they were not edited out for the English edition.

Of course Peter the Great is a wonderful subject for a skilled popular writer; Mr Massie has obviously done his homework, and he can quite often write a good paragraph. His interests are of course overwhelmingly traditional: He loves describing torture, battles, court-life in the anarchic years before Peter's majority. He is decent enough on the odd companions whom Peter collected – each of them in his way a miniature Peter. His great strength is his battle-pieces, which go on for some time: it is useful to have his new account of Poltava. Again, he is sensible to avoid any overt comparison of Russia now with Russia then. Such comparisons can of course be quite misleading, even though there are similarities that may deserve deeper consideration.

Within his limits, Massie has done a decent enough job of describing Peter's life. I am not sure if it needed doing at all; and the life of Peter prompts so many questions that the traditional "biographical" method may be the wrong one altogether. In a way, the whole business of transforming Muscovy into the Russian Empire reflects the spread of Calvinism. What Peter did was to employ great numbers of "Protestants" – Dutch or German – to tame and exploit the steppe country, the inhabitants of which could later be used to win further territories elsewhere. Peter had to conquer the Baltic, in order to consider Russia. The whole business was a matter of getting Peter to rob Paul; not surprisingly, the twin saints of his extraordinary reign.

Publishing power

By J. M. Roberts

MARINO BERENGO:
Intellettuali e libri nella Milano della Restaurazione
426pp. Turin: Einaudi. L18,000.

After the collapse of the Napoleonic Kingdom of Italy in 1814, Milan, its former capital, had thirty years even more remarkably free from disturbance than other parts of Italy. There were some bad times, economically speaking, but in general the period was (in Lombardy) one of growing prosperity and steady, if slow, innovation. One set of structural and technical changes has attracted the attention of Marino Berengo, a scholar already well-known for his work in Venetian history; he is less interested in their gross economic impact than their connection with a major cultural development: the transformation of publishing and book-selling which made Milan the centre of the Italian book-trade and led many Italian intellectuals to see it as their cultural capital. Professor Berengo claims rather more than this in the present book, in which he explores and measures this phenomenon; he suggests that this transformation also helped to determine the shape of the Italian intelligentsia of the Risorgimento and perhaps, even, somewhat to define the notion of the intellectual itself.

The documentation on which the story rests is much richer than might be expected by students who are used to working with the sometimes copious, but uneven and often informal records of English publishing-houses. In the case of Milan, the efforts of successive governments, Napoleonic and Austrian, to maintain effective regulation of the press (not merely for ideological and political reasons, but as part of the management of economic and socio-legal relationships) offers one line of fairly continuous and comprehensive documentation of the book trade. The Austrian regime of the Restoration though usually cautious, was not harsh, and it is not censorship so much as the judicial and fiscal record which provides the most valuable supplementation of the surviving papers of individual firms and entrepreneurs. Many local records, in the sources and often the trail runs out tantalizingly just at the point at which one would like to know more; but this is not the author's fault. Some of the businesses Berengo came across were very small in scale and have left few records. In other instances, information is only available by chance, or when things go wrong.

Professor Berengo is to be congratulated for having taken spoundings and unearthed informative data from a very varied and copious range of sources. With them he is able to reconstruct a great deal of a very complicated and messy world, one in which archaic, intensely personal, forms of publication by authors or authors negotiating (usually unfortunately) with individual printers or booksellers, gives way to a trade much more dominated by men who are recognizably, if not always, playing the role of modern publishers. In the process we are told about the transformation of promotion and selling, about changing relationships with printers and, above all, about the part played by economic change in the lives of intellectuals and men of letters seeking support other than that available from teaching or posts in the bureaucracy. Individual episodes and men stand out (the importance of the pre-1814 *Classici italiani* enterprise; the vigorous Stella; the printer-turned-religious-books-specialist Pogliani); and there are important judgments, such as the identification of the key importance of the 1840 Convention between Austria and Sardinia on literary property (later adhered to by other Italian states), the culmination of a twenty years' campaign to give effective protection to authors and publishers.

The thread of development is not always easy to seize and follow in this complicated body of data. Broadly, it proceeds chronologically as well as thematically, registering the complex of transitions of older forms of publication by noting the growing difficulties they faced (above all, in raising capital), the new forms of subscription and sale evolved to spread risks and costs, and the important personalities along the way. This is often very illuminating: the precariousness of the Vallardi brothers' enterprises is a striking index of the passage from one world to another. The effect, nonetheless, is sometimes confusing. It is not easy to be convinced of the importance of the cultural theme suggested by Berengo's approach and (for the good reason that the statistical data are sporadic) it is very hard to quantify his conclusions about the structure and economics of publishing.

Nonetheless, this is truly a pioneer work, certainly indispensable to the further development of studies until now neglected in Italian history. Moreover, it is full of good things. The difficulties of publication experienced by Foscolo, who was saved only by friends in place, deserve to be shared by a wider circle than those specifically concerned with the poet; Manzoni, too, looks a little different to the reader of *I promessi sposi* after Professor Berengo's account of his disastrous attempt to publish a private and definitive edition of the novel; it was shipwrecked on his intransigence over discounts.

The peerless peninsula

By Nicholas Faith

RENÉ PIJASSOU:
Le Médoc
Un Grand Vignoble de qualité
Tome I 748pp. Tome II 725pp.
Paris: Tallandier.

EDMUND PENNING-ROWSELL:
The Wines of Bordeaux
704pp. Allen Lane. £12.95.
0 7139 1292 8

CYRUS REDDING:
A History and Description of Modern Wines
408pp. Andrew Low (Fine Wines). £24.

GEORGE SAINTSBURY:
Notes on a Cellar-Book
166pp. Macmillan. £7.50.
0 333 00592 9

MICHAEL BROADBENT:
The Great Vintage Wine Book
432pp. Mitchell Beazley. £13.95.
0 85533 286 7
Christie's Wine Publications £9.95+ postage (paperback).
0 85533 344 8

JUDITH and ROBIN YAPP:
Vineyards and Vignerons
Illustrated by Charles Mozley.
125pp. Shaftesbury, Dorset: Blackmore Press. £7.95 (paperback, £3).
0950 2075 1 9

JANCIS ROBINSON:
The Wine Book
256pp. A and C Black. £5.95.
0 7136 2011 0

DAVID PEPPERCORN, BRIAN COOPER, ELWYN BLACKER:
Drinking Wine
A Complete Guide.
256pp. Macdonald. £7.95.
0 354 04419 2

Until 1953 it was assumed, without any real evidence, that great wines had been made continuously in the Gironde for a couple of thousand years. It was then that a young French geographer, Henri Enjalbert, published an article in *Annales*—perhaps of those seminal articles for which the journal is famous—demolishing this ancient myth, and presenting a new thesis: that it was the demand created by the "conspicuously consuming" societies of the early eighteenth century, above all in London, which led to the large-scale production in Bordeaux of high-quality wines. The most important outcome of this thesis was the creation of a school of studies in Bordeaux devoted to the manifold mysteries – historical, geographical, and geological—of the vine as it is grown in the Gironde.

The extent of previous ignorance in this field was startling. In the words of René Pijassou, probably Professor Enjalbert's most distinguished pupil, old authors

> copied each other: they stated authoritatively . . . that in the Bordeaux region, and hence in the Médoc, great wine had been produced since Roman times. "Patents of nobility" dating back two thousand years were thus conferred on the great wines of the Médoc. The reality was very different.

The quotation comes from M Pijassou's massive two-volume work on the Médoc, that flat, unlaspiring peninsula separating the Bay of Biscay from the estuary of the Gironde which produces more great or merely good wine than any other single place on earth. This book embodies a quarter of a century of research into the archives—most notably into the Archives Départementales de la Gironde and the papers preserved, more or less casually, in the attics of individual chateaux, or in the musty back rooms of the merchants and wine-brokers of the Quai des Chartrons in Bordeaux itself.

But a particular joy of writing about wine is that one can draw not only on written records, but also on the experience of the estate managers (*régisseurs*) and the cellar-masters (*maîtres de chai*) who grow the grapes and who make and cherish the wine. Only by working with the local experts can one discover two salient points about the whole Bordeaux wine business. There is, first, its total self-absorption, so that the outside world and its events are as far as possible ignored (probably the most extreme example of this is the fact that May 8, 1945, remembered elsewhere in France as the date on which Germany surrendered, is recollected in the Médoc as the date of a peculiarly ferocious late spring frost, which helped to reduce the quantity and enhance the quality of that year's vintage).

The second point one learns is that there is, effectively, nothing new under the broad skies of the Médoc: the quirks of the weather, and its influence at any given moment in the vine's annual growth-pattern, have all been charted, noted and pithily analysed by generations of brokers, estate-managers and shippers.

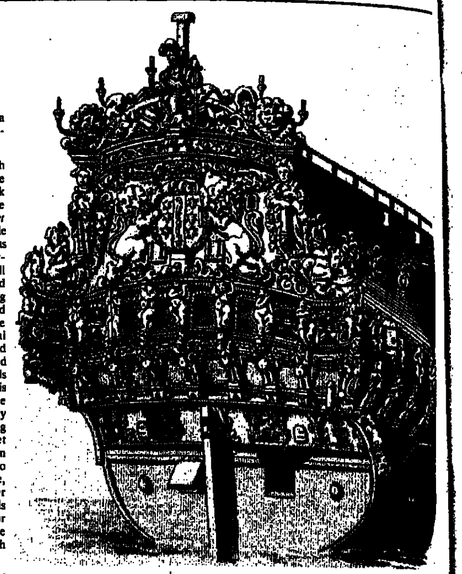
An analysis of the natural factors affecting vine production in the Médoc occupies the first three hundred pages of Pijassou's book. He then deals with the human influences: mainly that of the Parlementaires, the legal aristocracy who dominated Bordeaux for the centuries between the end of the English occupation and the French Revolution. With them came the exploitation of virtually all the sites on which fine wine could be produced. In Enjalbert's words: "You can only produce great wine on a strictly limited number of sites, and the characteristics required are so strictly limited that there is very little hope of extending the numbers". To which Pijassou adds perhaps the central point of the whole story: "Under these circumstances, the men who had the merit—or the genius—do not let us be afraid of the word—to exploit these sites played a decisive role in the creation and exploitation of great wines".

A shortcoming of Pijassou's approach is that he concentrates solely on the Médoc. Yet the crucial pioneering work in producing and above all selling fine claret (and not the thin and bitter *clairet nouveau* which had been the staple tipple of the English for five countries) was done in the Graves, just south of Bordeaux, by the Pontac family. So, to tell his story properly, he is forced to exceed his theoretical brief, and to an increasing extent as the parlementaires were forced to market their wines through the Anglo-Saxon wine merchants of the Quai des Chartrons. Although he has worked with an impressively extensive and varied lot of sources (ranging from the records of Brooks' Club to notarial minutes), his reliance in the historical sections on the archives of a few chateaux (especially Latour and Lafite) and of the leading firm of Bordeaux wine-brokers, Tastet and Lawton, inevitably leads to gaps in the coverage—as he himself is the first to admit. Virtually no work, for instance, has been done on the Médoc in the latter half of the Middle Ages, and there is another enormous gap during and after the French Revolution, when most of the parlementaires left the scene through emigration or execution.

Like the landscape he describes, M Pijassou's prose is at first sight dull, yielding its delights only to an attentive reader. In this he resembles the leading British student of the region, Edmund Penning-Rowsell, whose classic *Wines of Bordeaux* has just been revised and reissued (his up-to-dateness is very welcome: M Pijassou's studies were so protracted, that his last statistics for sizes of estates date from 1967, since when there has been massive and widespread planting in the Médoc).

Pijassou and Penning-Rowsell share many characteristics: they are very thorough; they have the habit of slipping shrewd and pungent comments into pages solid with statistics and they have both spent much time in the cellars of the Médoc. They have followed the French historian's advice to students of the rural past, "d'aller un peu aux champs". Outsiders tempted to sneer at the idea that visiting a succession of wine cellars is other than unalloyed pleasure should be forced to taste a few dozen young clarets every morning for a week—unless the backs of their mouths shrivel up from astrition the first day. And while Pijassou confines himself to châteaux with something to offer the historian, Penning-Rowsell has tried to visit every vineyard of importance in the vast *département* of the Gironde. Not always an easy matter:

> It is one thing to pass through the almost always open doors of the great chateaux with world-wide reputations and quite another to enter the small back-country farms, where the proprietor is out, and his child-girl wife does not venture to unlock the chai and allow one to taste. It took three persistent visits even to penetrate the cellars of one of the smaller crus classés.



This illustration of the stern of the Gouda, a Dutch two-decker of 1665 is taken from A Dictionary of Sea Painters *by E. H. H. Archibald (455pp. The Antique Collectors' Club, 5 Church Street, Woodbridge, Suffolk. £29.50. 0 902028 84 7), a lavishly illustrated work of reference which includes specialist sections on historic maritime flags and ship profile development as well as entries on over 800 painters.*

Unfortunately there is very little in common between the British and the French writers who have so professionalized the study of wine. Penning-Rowsell's historical chapters, which are clearer than any of the other books in either French or English, owe a great deal to the Bordeaux school, while for their part, the only English writer on whose work the French have drawn at all is the late André Simon, and his history of the wine trade in England. This is significant: for by far the most satisfying body of work on wine in English has been provided by literate wine merchants like Simon. Their pioneer, Cyrus Redding, published his classic *A History and Description of Modern Wine* in 1833 and it is a tribute to the continuing sophistication of the wine trade that a handsome new reprint of that work has been largely subscribed by professionals. Redding was not only thorough and robustly honest in preaching the need for wine purer than the adulterated mixtures then almost uniformly sold in Britain: he also wrote superbly well.

In this he contrasts sharply with George Saintsbury (whose deservedly famous *Notes on a Cellar-Book* has also just been reissued, regrettably preceded by a barrage of forewords). Saintsbury has been blamed as the inspirer of what Cyril Ray calls the Baroque School of wine writing. But to blame the snobberies and affectations of such as Warner Allen or Maurice Healy on Saintsbury is grossly unfair. His writing was convoluted because his mind was so full of the reading and the drinking of a lifetime that one thing led inevitably to several others—often in the same tortuous sentence. But he had a generosity of spirit and breadth of outlook denied to his vintage-obsessed successors. Saintsbury's qualities are summed up in a note in the third edition of his book, where he confesses that he had never, until it was offered to him one day, tasted Spanish cider (can one imagine his supposed successors admitting they had even *heard* of it?).

> I did not hesitate about accepting so good-natured an offer, and some very handsome bottles of "sidra Champagne" with a picture of a piper ("Gaitero") on the label duly arrived. There were not exactly "Guipuzcoan" like Burton's, but came from Villaviciosa in the Asturias (the Capital of the Tribards, of George Borrow himself) . . . it was rather of the Herefordshire than of the Devonshire type. I was exceedingly well favoured; of good body and colour, being nearly, and keeping the balance between too sweet and too dry with great success.

In his frank appreciation of the best, Saintsbury inspired not only the Baroque School but also writers like Michael Broadbent who work in the trade (he runs Christie's wine department). Broadbent combines the best of both schools: robust like Redding and Penning-Rowsell, unafraid, like Saintsbury, of his own free associations in attempting the always difficult task of translating tastes into words. For Broadbent a splendid Sauternes, Chateau Lafaurie Peyraguey 1969, had a bouquet which was "a little peppery and called to mind ivy leaves", a Chablis was "not rapier-like but rich, nutty, oaky, ripe". He can also be devastating, as on the new, artificial, "half-dry" German wines: "This smell of cats and tasted of nothing: dry dull and flat"; of another "Trocken" wine the ultimate insult: "I think I would have preferred tea".

Unfortunately, because Broadbent's book is so personal, there are major gaps in it so far as the ordinary fine wine buyer is concerned: he admits that, on his journeys to Bordeaux he is—for business reasons—forced to concentrate on old rather than young wines, and so cannot help the buyer of the newer vintages: and his chapter on California is equally and inevitably inadequate.

The strength of the English "professional" tradition, however, is precisely this: that even a small country wine merchant like Yapp's can produce its own handsome wine book, or that an unpretentious volume, like Jancis Robinson's *The Wine Book*, provides an absolutely clear guide even to such relative mysteries as *maceration carbonique* or "malolactic fermentation." There is no writing down to these books, no showing off. Even in a coffee-table volume like *Drinking Wine*, David Peppercorn is prepared to defy convention and produce his "star" rating which update the sancrosanct decision of the Classification of 1855 (respected eyes by M Pijassou, who compared different communes by the numbers of "classed growths" they contain.) Peppercorn's ratings simply acknowledge that, even in the Médoc, revolutionary changes can take place.

Perhaps the best witness to that revolution is one of M Pijassou's heroes, Jean-Paul Gardère, the wine broker who has done so much to rebuild Latour's storied yard and reputation over the past twenty years, bring home to the urban reader why and how such rural communities can survive hard times. "I've lived the best of times and the worst of times", he told me, "I could and waited for the bad years to pass". They did pass in the 1960s and 70s, and the present splendid crop of books marks the extent and depth of the revolution, for, like the best wines, they will last; they are, by and large, good.

Wort für Wort

By G. P. Butler

PETER TERRELL, VERONIKA CALDERWOOD-SCHNORR, WENDY V. A. MORRIS and ROLAND BREITSPRECHER (Compilers):
Collins German-English English-German Dictionary
1582pp. Collins. £9.95.
0 00 433480 9

To earn all the accolades its makers and promoters claim it deserves, the *Collins German-English English-German Dictionary* will have to be put to work in libraries and studies for quite some time yet. First impressions suggest, however, that the claims are not immodest: the third in the publishers' well-regarded bilingual series (after the Collins Spanish and the Collins-Robert French), this remarkably inexpensive book does indeed appear to contain "more than any comparable one-volume, two-way German and English Dictionary"; it plainly does, for its size, give very detailed treatment to the most frequently used, everyday words in both languages"; and its "system of style labels", its "indicating material", its "clear, open layout" certainly make it easy to use, a dictionary which yields a wealth of precise and helpful information with a minimum of fuss. Others who have similar projects in the pipeline — focusing on what Collins calls "the vocabulary of the educated layman" — will be hard put to it to match this combination of quality and price.

The layman in question will still of course have his problems, and they will derive very large from, first, his nationality, second, the gaps in his education, and, third, his wish or need to check German-English entries against English-German and vice versa.

Take abbreviations: a German sixth-former may be expected to know what BAföG stands for; the ignorant and/or the English are left guessing, even though they are told that "er kriegt BAföG" is "(*Univ sl*)" for "he gets a grant". They will experience much the same difficulty with Gestapo, HO-Oschalt, jwd, REFA-Mann; and the U in U-Bahn and U-Boot; and they will have to turn to some other source altogether to find BASF, BBC (= Brown, Boveri & Cie), BMW, Hanomag, HH, HJ, SBZ, SD, SPD. Similarly, it probably takes a Britisher or at least Anglophile to know that BL is not merely an "*abbr of* Bachelor of Law"; and even an Englishman, having had CBE, NCB, NUJ, NUM, NUR, NUS, NUT, PDQ, and PLO deciphered for him, may regret the omission of CH, NATSOPA, NBG, NUPE, PLP.

Take colloquialisms and slang: unlike "Emanze" ("*sl*) women's libber (*inf*)", "Chauvi" is not in the German wordlist, but you will find it if you know where to look in the English (see "(male) chauvinist pig"); the flavour of "verarschen" is nicely captured in the German-English section by "to take the piss out of (*sl*)", but neither locution occurs where you would expect it in the English-German; "to live the life of Riley" is tucked away under "Gott", "Fanny Adams" belongs to "sweet", "he knows his onions" ("er kennt seinen Kram") is nowhere to be found in "kennen" or "Kram", and "da liegt der Hase im Pfeffer" ("that's the crux of the matter") reappears to illustrate not "crux" but "rub"; "(as) bold as brass" occurs under "Wanze", not under "frech" or "bold" or "brass"; "as thin as a rake" is part of the entry for "Hering", but not associated with the headwords "dunn", "rake", or "thin"; for "drunk as a lord" see "drunk" (not "lord") and "Strandhaubitze" and "Vollchen", but for "drunk as a newt" see "newt" (not "drunk"); "sand" (for "sandboy") and "fiddle" are the entries to consult if you wish to complete "happy as . . ." and "fit as . . ." — "Larry" and "flea" will get you nowhere; and no connection is made between "black", "cold", and "mean" on the one hand and the ace of spades, charity, and dirt on the other.

Or take those terms or sayings or turns of phrase which, being more deeply embedded than most in the culture that produced them, are of particular interest: both halves of Collins do justice to such relatively unproblematical favourites as "all's well that ends well", "to carry coals to Newcastle", "you can tell that to the marines", "to set the Thames on fire" (repeated in the German-English section under "Ende", "Eule", "Grossmutter", and "Pulver", respectively); but "to send sb to Coventry", rendered as "jdn schneiden", does not feature under "schneiden"; nor does "to (go *or*) have gone for a burton" – "im Eimer sein (*sl*), futsch sein (*sl*)" — under "Eimer" or "futsch" (but under "Gesangenen"); nor does "between the Devil and the deep blue sea" — "in einer Zwickmühle" — under "Zwickmühle", which offers "a catch-22 situation" instead; and a similar unevenness is apparent in the treatment of comparable German material (see, for instance, "beckmessern", "Hornberger Schiessen", "Knigge", "Münchhausiade", "Pappenheimer", and try to trace them in the English-German section among the vocabulary used to translate them).

Perhaps, taken in all, "it's a swings and roundabouts situation" (Collins, under "swing")? No doubt about it, cross-referencing can take up quite a lot of space, and it might be argued that Collins could only have made room for more such information by reducing its already limited range of material. And since even now we find ourselves wishing for more and asking why X has been excluded and Y not — for example: Why, if we are to have "pommy bastard", withhold "chunder" (or "chunter", for that matter)? Why has "nuke" become simply "n *(US sl)* Kern- *or* Atomkraftwerk *nt*"? Was "eponymous" not thought important enough to be included – and explained, however hard it may be to translate? – in the light of such reactions surely any thinning out, for no matter what purpose, would have done more harm than good? Well, not necessarily. For Collins exemplifies many of its headwords with something akin to extravagance: five lines are devoted to the figurative usage of "parochial", eight to one meaning of "pathetic", thirty-eight to "pattern", forty-seven to the word-range from "particular" to "particularly", and about 200 (two columns) to "pass" and its compounds. The material selected is presented quite accurately, though every now and again there are naturally definitions and translations which one would wish to question (it comes as a surprise, for example, to find "a man of parts" translated as "ein Universalgenie", and "Labskaus" defined without reference to "lobscouse"). But the selection itself could have been considerably broader, and the volume no whit bulkier had the selectors' urge to illustrate been kept more firmly in check. Once you have been told the word for "word" it scarcely needs pointing out, in a smallish dictionary, that "word for word" can be translated by "Wort für Wort" and "he had the last word" by "er hatte das letzte Wort". This is not to belittle the truly admirable achievement of the Collins team: it is to ask whether, when they finally assembled their multifarious data, they felt quite sure they had got the balance right.

Reading for Writers

By Alan Bell

G. H. BALLANTYNE:
The Signet Library and its Librarians, 1722-1972
194pp. Scottish Library Association. £11.50.
0 900649 18 6

The recent series of auction sales, and a previous series in 1959-60, has reduced the library of the Society of Writers to Her Majesty's Signet to a working collection of law books for the use of its member solicitors, supplemented by a general collection of Scottish history and literature which includes the manuscript of Scott's *The Bride of Lammermoor* as well as some important special collections which were rightly withheld from the sales. This reshaping of the Signet collections to their original and more strictly professional purpose has provided an occasion for the present Librarian to look back at the work of his predecessors in a detailed monograph which illustrates their personalities as well as their curatorial achievements.

Macvey Napier, who succeeded Jeffrey as editor of the *Edinburgh Review*, and also edited the *Encyclopaedia Britannica*, was Signet Librarian from 1805 to 1837, a period in which he was able to take advantage of massive contemporary sales to increase the Library's book-stock from 5,000 to 40,000 volumes. The Society was obviously startled by such an apparently uncontrolled expansion, and there were some awkward rows during his tenure, but Napier's literary eminence and bulk purchasing gave the library a special standing in Edinburgh. His successor, David Laing, the prominent and wide-ranging Scottish antiquary, was in charge from 1837 to 1878, and it was a pity that the Society had to restrict its purchase funds severely when such specialized skill was at its disposal.

A tradition of historical scholarship became attached to the Signet Library; T.G.Law, a former Ornorian and an indefatigable editor for the Scottish History Society, and Dr C. A. Malcolm, long a helpful oracle on all matters of local history, were among those who sustained it. The all-too-brief tenure of J. P. Edmond, whose work as librarian to the Earls of Crawford is so well recorded in Nicolas Barker's *Bibliotheca Lindesiana*, may well have been the most interesting possibility in the history of the library, but he died after only a year and a half as librarian, leaving the *Annals of Early Scottish Printing* (in which he had collaborated with W.K. Dickson, later first librarian of the National Library of Scotland) as a memorial to his promising career in Edinburgh.

The Signet Library, as is well known, provides one of the most elegant accommodations for books in the world: "The most beautiful room I have ever seen", George IV exclaimed on inspecting it during the Royal Visit of 1822 (a remark that was reported back to Thomas Stothard, who had recently painted the cupola). The history of the various schemes for accommodating both the Advocates' and Signet libraries is a complicated one, and Mr Ballantyne proves a competent guide, giving some useful details that should be of interest to architectural historians as well as students of library design. The contemplated premises, particularly the upper hall (originally for the Advocates' Library, who soon sold it to the solicitors) are a fit subject for admiration by architectural connoisseurs, though from a librarian's point of view they were hopelessly inadequate for storage of large quantities of books. Beautiful though the Signet Library is, the building is full of impracticalities, as Mr Ballantyne himself will know best, especially when faced with the task of reshelving his legal collection as the library reverts to its original role.

Stretching the shelves

By Geoffrey Naylor

PHILIP GASKELL:
Trinity College Library: the first 160 years
275 pp. Cambridge University Press £30.
0 521 231000 0

Ten years ago, in collaboration with Robert Robson, Philip Gaskell published a short introduction to the history of Trinity College Library. In his 1978-79 Sandars Lectures, now printed, he returns to the subject for a detailed account of the first century and a half of the great institutional collection under his charge. Its story should be an important one, as the study of the working collection of a college so important in the intellectual history of the nation, and within the limitations the sources impose on his scheme Dr Gaskell succeeds in conveying the special significance of the Trinity books. The records are distressingly weak, and even the precise location of the library before the end of the sixteenth century – probably in the old Michaelhouse library room – remains uncertain.

Yet by a skilled use of analogies with other examples, and by a close analysis of bibliographical evidence (such as chain-staple marks or tilling on different edges), he is able to convey the probable layout of the library premises, with many practical diagrams and excellent photographs to demonstrate the physical arrangement of the books. Dr Gaskell is fortunate that the probable scale of the early library is small and predictable enough to make such ingenious comparisons plausible: "in practice", he tells us, "the limit for a large college library before the 1590s was about 500 volumes", and limitations of the curriculum meant that two-thirds of this surprisingly small stock was concerned with divinity.

Important donations were to follow in the opening years of the seventeenth century, and Sir Edward Stanhope's bequest separately endowing the Librarianship of the College, a foundation without parallel in any other Oxford or Cambridge college – was an inducement to other benefactors as well as a guarantee that the existing holdings would be better catalogued and cared for. It was at this period that Trinity received in a few major bequests many of the great medieval manuscripts (far superior in quality to the ordinary scholarly texts that its predecessors, Michaelhouse and the King's Hall, are likely to have owned), with their distinguished archiepiscopal provenances.

By 1640 the Library, in better premises and under specialist management, contained 1900 volumes, and there had been a rapid growth in the scientific sections (where curiosities – including in Trinity's case "a petrified fig" – were to follow, as in so many learned libraries of the period). Increasing stock – 2,875 books in 1667, 3,570 in 1695 – led to more sophisticated shelving arrangements and class catalogues, and Dr Gaskell is particularly interesting on these developments in library economy. Towards the end of the century Trinity College library had expanded enough to make the society dissatisfied with the old premises, which were in any case in danger of physical collapse, and the earmarking of some additional rents for library purposes made the projection of a new building possible. Bentley was soon to point out that expenditure on buildings rather than on books was "robbing the library" and forced the fellowship to buy books out of ordinary income to make up for some of the expenditure on the Wren building. The great new library that was then under construction proved to be a wise investment, as the elegant new schemes prompted several major gifts from "generous persons, favourers of learning" which soon tripled the college's holdings. It was a grand design, which yielded, as Isaac Barrow had proclaimed in the flysheet appealing for benefactions, "much Ornament to the University, and some honour to the Nation".

A Guide to Irish Bibliographical Material (502pp. The Library Association. £35.00. 0 85365 931 1), the second edition of "a bibliography of Irish bibliographies and sources of information", replaces a volume of 3,800 entries published in 1964. The editor, Alan R. Eager, has diligently assembled 9,500 entries on all subjects of Irish interest, arranged in Dewey order with full author and subject indexes. Naturally enough, in a field which has never been so comprehensively examined before, many addenda will be found to make the third edition of even greater authority, but the present volume marks a distinct advance towards an indispensable national bibliography.

G.N.

The cyclical method

By Philip Mason

H. KAY JONES:
Butterworths
A Century of a Publishing House
263pp. Butterworths. £12.
0 406 17606 X

The history of a publishing house is likely to be of interest mainly to those who have personal connections with it. But if it is a house whose roots go back as far as Butterworth's it may, as this book does, combine both imperialism and private enterprise.

Joseph Butterworth started his business as a law bookseller at 43 Fleet Street in 1793, and by 1818 his nephew, Henry Butterworth, was over *The Hand and Stars*, 7 Fleet Street, which had been started as a bookshop and publishing house by Richard Tottel in 1553. Henry Butterworth opened his account with Messrs Brooks, which the company has continuously for 160 years. In 1825 the business was bought for £5,500 by James, who soon put in charge of it a young man, Stanley Shaw Bond.

Stanley Bond had been respectable rather than brilliant. After a period of modest prosperity Shaw Bond, born in 1875, entered the period of imperial expansion. He was the first who thought of publishing a statement of English law, personally approved by every Chancellor of the day to the Lord Chief Justice, and between 1907 and 1911 Halsbury's *Laws of England* appeared in fourteen volumes. It was a task which might well have been undertaken by the state – no doubt at great expense – but in fact it was carried through in the teeth of opposition and at great financial risk by one determined man. The first few volumes ran at a loss but the tide suddenly turned: ". . . one night I went to bed facing blue ruin and awoke the next morning to find myself a wealthy man". The second edition began in 1931, the third in 1951, the fourth in 1968. Each edition takes about ten years to complete and there are four volumes a year; annual supplements fill the gap between editions. It is a publisher's dream – and *Halsbury's Laws* was soon followed by *Halsbury's Statutes* in twenty volumes, and other "major works", all operable in cycles with supplements and new editions.

This simple idea worked in England. It was an obvious step to extend it and subordinate companies were set up in Australia, Canada, India, South Africa and New Zealand. *Halsbury's Laws* spread the influence of the Common Law and may well have been a factor in Commonwealth cohesion. To extend the conception of the cyclical major work to medicine and to science was not so easy: books are the lawyer's tools but neither doctors nor scientist looks on them in quite the same way. Bond, however, was an imperialist and it was his own money that he risked.

In private life, Stanley Bond gave generously to charities, but in business he was a hard man. He was "careful of both the law and the profits". A case of books once left the warehouse with the inscription: "The wages of sin is death but the wages of Butterworths is worse". Bond expected absolute loyalty to himself and the firm, long hours of regular work, occasional spells of high tension with all-night sessions. He collected a band of dedicated, hard-working, accurate, patient, unlikely to attempt to become his rivals. He died suddenly in 1943.

Such men do not often leave successors of their own calibre. In the quarter-century that followed, the devoted band of Old Butterworthians worked hard to continue in the old ways; they survived the impact of occasional impatient go-getters who were eager to boost profits. The problem of those years was whether to cut out the less profitable areas of the business – Bond's imperial adventures overseas, his Jameson Raids into medicine and science – or to hold on in the hope that one day they would take wings and fly.

In the end, the firm was taken over by the International Publishing Corporation, which wisely allowed the Old Butterworthians to continue on the established course. H. Kay Jones has produced from a mass of detail an account which reveals the structure of the firm's history and throws sidelights on that of the nation.

Thirteen years of mounting interest in her writings are reflected in the new edition of B.J. Kirkpatrick's authoritative *A Bibliography of Virginia Woolf* (282pp. Clarendon Press: Oxford University Press. £20. 0 19 818185 x). Although the frontispiece-portrait has disappeared, the brief schedule of manuscripts now omits letters and the text has been recast in a smaller typeface, this edition runs to fifty-six more pages than its predecessor. All sections other than "Manuscripts" are enlarged by new entries, the list of "Doubtful and untraced contributions" has been entirely revised, and translations have increased from 112 to 199.

The self-indulgent eye

By Nesta Roberts

ROBERT BERNEN:
In the Heat of the Sun
133pp. Hamish Hamilton. £7.95.
0 241 10521 8

The self-portrait of Robert Bernen on the end-papers of *In the Heat of the Sun* is evidence that he is an artist as well as a Harvard classical scholar and, for the past ten years, a Donegal sheep farmer; a life which he has chronicled in *Tales from the Blue Stacks*. None the less, when he found himself in a small French port, with the paling blue of the sea in front, the pink and ochre houses behind and the swallows (or were they, perhaps, swifts?) flying in counterpoint against the evening sky, he lost faith in brush and crayon and decided that his sketchbook must be completed in prose.

It can be done, but the perils are many. The essentials are stereoscopic vision and a capacity for renunciation which makes one able to disregard the alluring shallows of "colourful" descriptive writing in favour of sounding the depths.

Mr Bernen's eye is enviably acute, never more so than when he is dealing with action and movement of any kind, whether it is a fly probing a flower or the gestures of an old countrywoman telling how she gathers lime blossom to make *tisane*, though he leaps to give it too free a rein: Only a fanatical apostle of the New Wave would be likely to find a compelling blow-by-blow description of a post office clerk tearing off, licking and affixing a stamp on a parcel. Even in Paris, which, on the whole, he seems rather to dislike for the reasons of noise, pollution, traffic, public aggressiveness, which cause most of us, natives included, to complain at times), his eye enables him to make charming *trouvailles*: for instance that, from a distance of half a mile, the rather hideous church of the Invalides can look like "a chapel of perfect size and proportions".

It is the renunciation which Mr Bernen is short on: he is self-indulgent, and this, allied with a certain tendency to prolixity, gives birth to passages like the following, taken from his Métro portraits:

> Chewing gum, chewing gum, with big mouth-opening shows, jaw muscles expanding, contracting, pulling, tightening, chewing gum, head stuck, light summer dress and light sandals, left leg over right, nylons, white summer jacket, tan leather bag, peroxide hair, slack body, chewing gum, waiting, no thought, chewing gum.

The definite form and significance which the blurb claims for *In the Heat of the Sun* is lacking. Mr Bernen has not organized his sketches into an easel picture, though there is ample material here for one.

In reading against Mr Bernen's next visit to France, *Vingt dents*, is not the slang for "police" but for "look out" or "scarper" often with the implication that the *flics* or *roussins* are coming.